



Govt. of Odisha

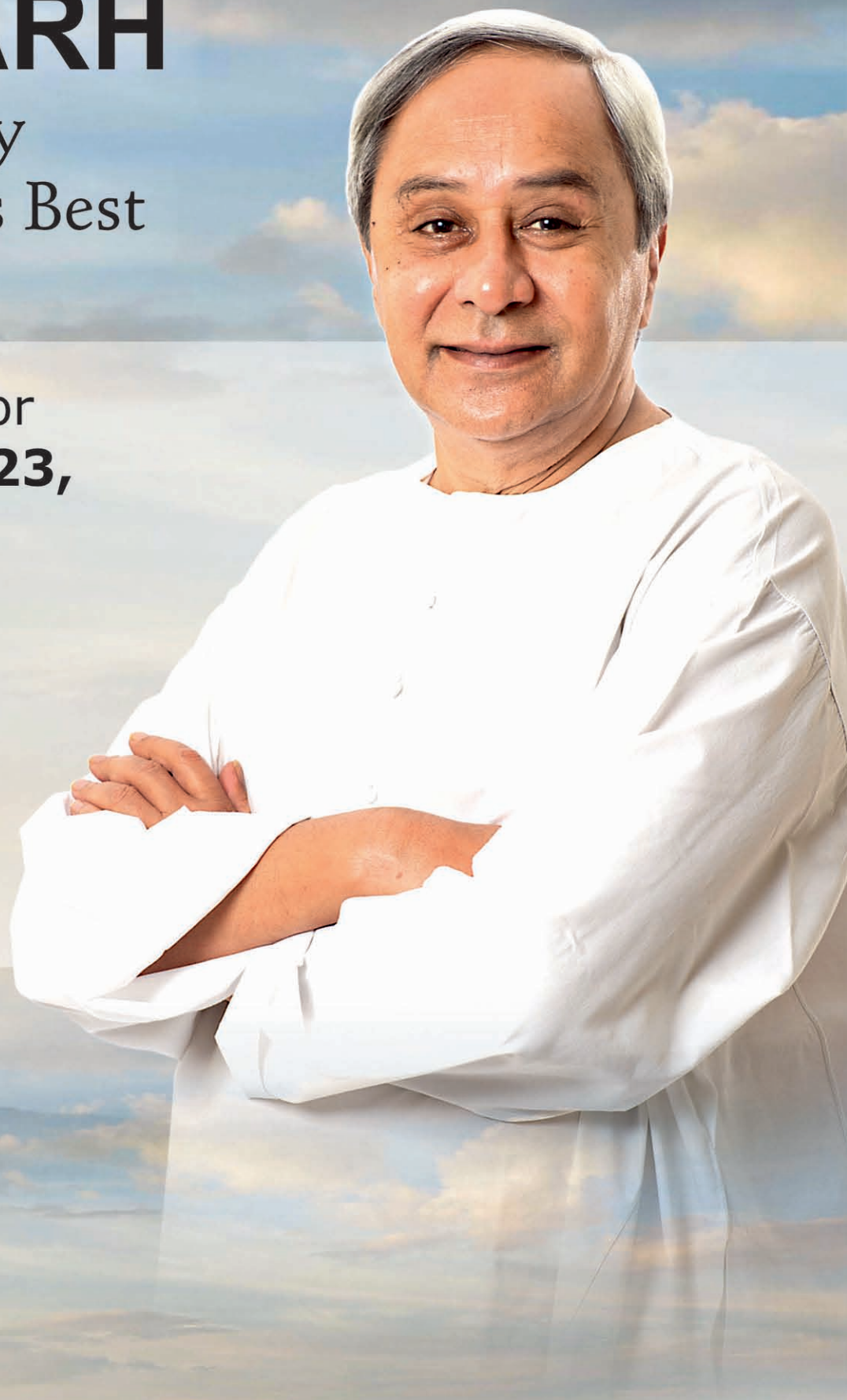
Odisha's different identity **SUNDARGARH**

Home for Hockey
Now Host to World's Best
Hockey Event

DSPL-204

With Odisha getting the hosting rights for the **FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023**, Sundargarh is organising this hockey extravaganza at Rourkela along with Bhubaneswar.

To host the matches, Rourkela is coming up with the **biggest hockey stadium of the country** with a sitting capacity of **20000** match lovers.



Shri Naveen Patnaik

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

will lay the foundation stone

of the Stadium on

16th February 2021 || 9.30 AM

Rourkela

OIPR-29001/13/0014/2021



Sports & Youth Services Department





NICKI MINAJ'S DAD KILLED IN HIT-AND-RUN NEAR NY

Robert Maraj, father of rapper Nicki Minaj, was killed in a hit-and-run case near New York. According to police, Maraj, 64, was hit by a car Friday when he was walking on a road in Mineola, Long Island, reports *hollywoodreporter.com*. He was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

JOSEPHINE JOBERT WANTS TO PLAY A BOND GIRL

French actress Josephine Jobert, cousin of Hollywood star Eva Green, says she wants to play a Bond girl. Green had appeared as James Bond's love interest Vesper Lynd in the 2006 global hit *Casino Royale*. Jobert is currently penning a film she hopes will take Hollywood by storm.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may be alone, but not necessarily lonely. You may want to listen to your inner voice, and express your true self creatively. Spend the evening with a loved one who can hear the music in your silence too, suggests Ganesh.

TAURUS
Today is a day of closure. You may find yourself on the winning side of things, says Ganesh. Pending projects will reach completion and you will achieve satisfaction and success in education. With a little extra effort, you can build a castle from stone. Ganesh wishes you a cheerful and colourful day.

GEMINI
Today, you are likely to remain transparent in all your dealings, forecasts Ganesh. You can be optimistic about your chances of success if you choose to propose to that special someone. The day will bring more pleasure than pain.

CANCER
There is something different about today. It is unlike any other day. Just when you will start believing that there is nothing great about the day, it will spring a surprise. There have been days where life has thrown carrots at you; then there have been days when it has hurled bricks. Today, you will be on the receiving end of countless kisses.

LEO
The discomfort similar to the fish-out-of-water syndrome will be a thing of the past, as today you will be quite flexible and would want to remain on the move, says Ganesh. So much so that you may even begin to feel bound by the environment in your office.

VIRGO
Razor-sharp and aesthetic to the last cell in your body, entertain and enthrall people with your quip, especially at a social do, says Ganesh. But conserve that zest and save the time to pay due attention to matters of supreme importance, warns Ganesh.

LIBRA
Your instincts are at their peak today. Generally, this means a lot of good, but for you, it may also mean having to put up with the trouble of small things bothering you in a big way. So, it becomes highly important for you to remain balanced and focused.

SCORPIO
Investing in real estate could yield maximum profits today, says Ganesh. An unusual gain from speculative trade is also on the cards. But you may need to spend time in the waiting room, before a more profitable opportunity comes by.

SAGITTARIUS
The winds of fortune will usher in your dreams and make them come true. Be careful not to go overboard with your foresight-ness, lest they be marked delusions, warns Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
It may seem too far-fetched, but your boss will bank on your brilliance and unmatched abilities to get respite from the existing problems, says Ganesh. Moreover, much to the dismay of your rivals, you will have your way and gain popularity by winning the hearts of your clients.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will iron out any trouble with ease. But you may choose to play martyr and shoulder a bit of blame. That's quite a lot to do for others, even if it is done out of compassion.

PISCES
Some conflicts could crop up in the morning on the domestic front. However, they will cease to be a cause of annoyance as the day progresses. Come evening and you will be in as fine a mood as you ever were, ready to spend time basking in the affection of your near and dear ones, says Ganesh.

Laughter is like windshield wiper: Kriti

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Kharbada has shared a stunning throwback picture and said that laughter is like the windshield wiper.

Kriti posted a picture dressed in a white cotton dress, sitting on a sofa and smiling ear-to-ear. "Laughter is like the windshield wiper; it doesn't stop the rain but allows us to keep going. #live #love #laugh #throwback," she wrote as the caption.

Kriti was last seen in the revenge drama *Taish* directed by Bejoy Nambiar.

Her next release, *14 Phere* is directed by Devanshu Singh. The film is a contemporary social

comedy that casts her opposite Vikrant Massey.

Recently, the *Shadi Men Zaroor Aana* actress shared a video of her first jetty ride on Instagram.

She seemed headed for the shoot of her upcoming film *14 Phere*.



Abhishek on why it took so long to get noticed

Mumbai: Abhishek Banerjee has been in the Hindi film industry for over a decade. He was impressive in films such as *No One Killed Jessica*, *Phillauri* and *Ajji* among others, but it has only been in the past few years that he started getting noticed in mainstream movies, with roles in films like *Stree*, *Dream Girl* and *Bala*, and his act as Hathoda Tyagi in the web series *Paatal Lok*.

Talking about why it took him so long to get noticed, Abhishek, who has worked with several big directors as a casting director in the past, said that he looked at what was not working for him as a performer. "I knew a lot of people and if still I was not getting cast in a good role that meant that people lacked trust in me as an actor and performer. So, first I had to work towards that," he said. "There are a lot of actors who are already in Bombay, are good but gaining that trust of directors takes time and they also slowly have to prove themselves with every role," Abhishek summed up.

'Sex appeal is not in your body parts'

Mumbai: Singer Neha Bhasin Monday revealed that she was fat-shamed regularly during her stint with the pop group Viva, but has now learnt how to feel sexier in her skin.

Neha posted a picture on Instagram with a message next to it, recalling how she has gained weight during lockdown but she doesn't care about such things anymore.

"I was 49 kgs in Viva and I was fat shamed everyday. I am 65kgs here. I put on weight in quarantine and I have never felt sexier. Weight is a number you can change but shaming oneself is damaging and toxic. Sex appeal is not in your body parts. It's in you," she wrote.

"Sex appeal is not in your size, it's in you. Be you.", adding to that in one post, she further wrote, "Sexist exotic lady of all times #matahari didn't have abs. It's time we embrace human bodies in their natural form." added in another post. Neha recently released her romantic track Taara.



Threats to artistes, directors worry 70 per cent OTT users

RECENTLY ACTOR RICHA CHADHA RECEIVED VIOLENCE AND DEATH THREAT FOR ALLEGEDLY STEREOTYPING DALITS IN THE MOVIE, MADAM CHIEF MINISTER

Seventy per cent OTT users do not approve of threats of intimidation, violence and death issued to artists, directors and producers of movies and shows.

As per a survey conducted by LocalCircles, a social media platform to discuss issues, there have been a spate of cases of threats of intimidation, violence and death issued to artists, directors and producers of movies and shows.

Recently, one of the artistes, Richa Chadha received violence and death threat for allegedly stereotyping Dalits in the movie, *Madam Chief Minister*.

When OTT users were asked whether such incidents worry them, the majority of 58 per cent OTT users said "Yes, quite a bit", and 15 per cent said "Yes, somewhat". Further breaking down the poll, 12 per cent users said "No, doesn't affect me much", while 15 per cent said "Not at all", and 3 per



cent couldn't say.

Many of the members who participated in the discussion on the subject said that such threats should have no place in the society and if they are not acted upon sternly

and swiftly by law enforcement agencies, they will only increase over time.

The survey received over 50,000 responses from OTT users located in 311 districts of India.

There are currently more than 40 OTT video streaming platforms in India.

The Government of India late last year brought OTT video streaming platforms under the ambit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Recently 17 OTT players have adopted a self-regulation code that was introduced in September. These providers include Amazon Prime Video, Netflix, Disney+Hotstar, SonyLiv, MX Player, Jio Cinema, Eros Now, Viacom (Voot), Alt Balaji, Arre, HoiChoi, Hungama, Shemaroo, Discovery Plus, Aha and Lionsgate Play.

Consumers however currently seem to have little understanding of the OTT code of regulation and when asked if they would like more information about the OTT code of conduct, majority of them i.e. 78 per cent said "Yes," 14 per cent said "No", and eight per cent couldn't say.

FUN post

PEANUTS



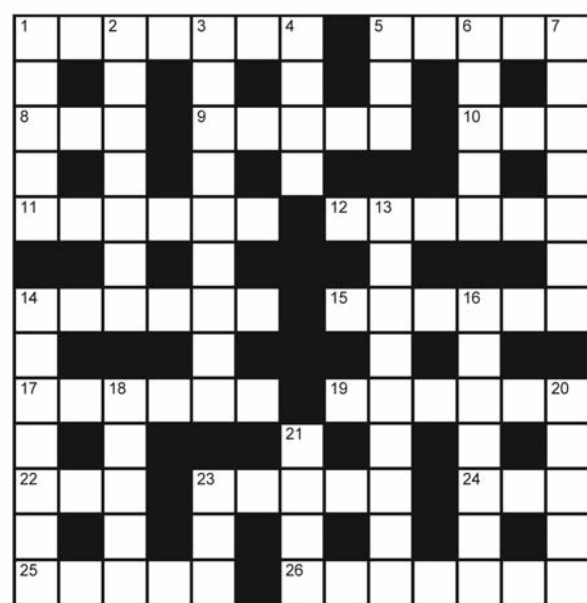
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



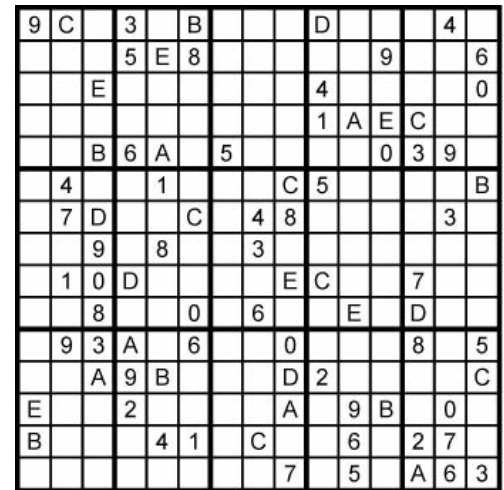
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Family tree entry
 - 5 Soothing ointment
 - 8 Raises
 - 9 Small three-masted vessel
 - 10 Collar
 - 11 Film genre
 - 12 "Lady" on a horse
 - 14 Edema
 - 15 Little rock
 - 17 Jeanne d'Arc, for one
 - 19 Break out
 - 22 Joke
 - 23 Sarcastic
 - 24 Leave speechless
 - 25 Airport problem
 - 26 Military meals, at times
 - Down**
 - 1 Spa feature
 - 2 Italian rice
 - 3 With apprehension
 - 4 Dwindles
 - 5 Dry, as wine
 - 6 Hawaiian veranda
 - 7 Hug
 - 13 Alibi for being tardy
 - 14 Broken
 - 16 Swagger
 - 18 Star in Orion
 - 20 Decorative pitchers
 - 21 Docking spot
 - 23 Like a wallflower

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



KRITI'S METAPHOR

Actor Kriti Kharbanda says laughter is like the windshield wiper, it doesn't stop the rain but allows people to keep going

LEISURE



CAPITOL RIOT INQUIRY

Bipartisan support for an independent Sept 11-style commission into the Capitol riot is growing after Trump's impeachment trial

INTERNATIONAL P8



INDIA IN COMMAND

Ravichandran Ashwin's century takes India close to victory as they set 482-run target for England

SPORTS BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 | 2021

P1

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You are being arrested for sedition. You read Greta's tweet but didn't troll her!

SHORT TAKES

Vax for those above 50 from March 1

Bhubaneswar: Following healthcare professionals and frontline workers, people above 50 years will get Covid-19 vaccines. The state government is going to start the vaccination drive for such citizens from March 1. "The state government has decided to inoculate people above 50 years from March 1. The vaccination drive will begin after registration of those citizens," said state government's technical spokesperson Jayant Panda Monday. The second dose vaccination of healthcare workers (HCWs) was also started Monday. It will continue till March 15. Meanwhile, 200 CRPF jawans received Covaxin shots at the CRPF group centre.

Mkts at fresh high

Mumbai: Equity benchmark Sensex rallied over 610 points to finish above the 52,000-mark for the first time Monday, tracking significant gains in financial stocks amid a positive trend in global markets. After touching a record high of 52,235.97 during the day, the 30-share BSE index ended 609.83 points or 1.18 per cent up at 52,154.13. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty soared 151.40 points or 1 per cent to finish at a record high of 15,314.70. It touched an intraday peak of 15,340.15. Axis Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, climbing around 6 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	52154.13 ↑ 609.83
NIFTY	15314.70 ↑ 151.40
DOLLAR	73.01 ↑ ₹0.02
EURO	88.04 ↑ ₹0.09
GOLD	₹47,295 ↓ ₹23
SILVER	₹69,990 ↑ ₹873

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	35.6°C	34.4°C
TEMP MIN	17.5°C	16.6°C
Humidity	89%	76%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

Bandh peaceful in state

THE BJD NEITHER SUPPORTED NOR OPPOSED THE BANDH BUT THE BJP CRITICISED THE CONGRESS FOR CAUSING TROUBLE TO PEOPLE BY ENFORCING THE BANDH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The six-hour bandh call given by the Congress protesting against the runaway rise in fuel prices and other issues including law and order problem in the state passed off peacefully.

Educational institutions remained closed, train services were affected and vehicles remained off the roads during the bandh that began at 7 am. The shops and other business establishments remained closed in several places in the state. No untoward incident, however, was reported from any district.

Congress activists blocked the national highways in various parts of the state, including in the capital city, leading to huge traffic jams. Congress members led by MLA Suresh Routray staged a 'rail roko' at Bhubaneswar railway station.

Air and bus travellers also faced a tough time reaching their destinations due to the unavailability of public transport.

Bijay Kumar Ray, one of the stranded passengers at Bhubaneswar railway



Vehicles stranded at Satsang Vihar of Bhubaneswar due to state-wide bandh, Monday.

station, said, "I arrived at the station during wee hours today but failed to get any autos to go to the bus stand. We are waiting for the bandh to end soon so that we would board a Kendrapara-bound bus to go home."

Hundreds of buses and heavy vehicles were lined up on the national highway-16 following the shutdown. Passengers were seen stranded at the railway stations and bus stops. However, emergency vehicles including ambu-

lance, milk van, and marriage party vehicles were allowed.

"Both the Centre and the state government are imposing unreasonable taxes on fuel leading to a steep hike in their prices which in turn lead to an increase in the prices of other essential commodities," said Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Niranjan Patnaik.

He said the Narendra Modi government is not paying heed to the plight

of the poor and the middle-class. "I thank the people of Odisha for supporting the bandh," he added.

As vehicles remained off the roads, many government employees pedaled to offices across the state including in Bhubaneswar. The state Congress president himself used a two-wheeler to reach the Congress office here.

The main gates of the Lok Seva Bhavan were closed at 10.15 am to prevent agitators from entering the premises while employees used side gates for entry and exit.

The Congress workers were found involved in a scuffle with the Commissionerate Police at AG square when the later tried to stop them from breaking the barricades. The workers were also engaged in a verbal duel with a commuter at the PMG Square. The glasses of the car were allegedly damaged by the workers.

Some government and private offices in the city were spotted functioning but with a reduced attendance as compared to the normal days. Some vehicles also started plying on the city roads after 11 am.

Fuel prices up for 7th day in a row

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 15: Petrol and diesel prices maintained a northward rally Monday, the seventh day in row when the retail prices rose across the country, with oil on the boil in global markets and both crude and product prices seeing a big spike.

Oil marketing companies raised the pump price of diesel by a high level of 29 paise per litre and petrol by another 26 paise per litre in Delhi. With this increase, petrol is now priced at ₹88.99 a litre and diesel ₹79.35 a litre in the national capital. In the last seven days, the price went up by ₹2.06 per litre for petrol while diesel

FUEL PRICES IN CITY

PETROL	₹89.68 (+0.26)
DIESEL	₹86.45 (+0.32)

rate has risen by ₹2.56 a litre. Across the country as well the petrol price increase ranged from 23-26 paise per litre and diesel price 28-30 paise per litre depending on the level of local taxes on the two petroleum products.

In Mumbai, petrol price is just ₹4 per litre short (₹95.46 a litre) of touching three digit mark of ₹100 per litre for the very first ever anywhere in the country. Diesel price in the city is closing on ₹90 a litre (₹86.34 a litre).

Delhi Police looks for Maha lawyer, techie

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 15: A Mumbai lawyer and a Beed engineer joined arrested climate activist Disha Ravi in creating a protest toolkit backing the farmers' agitation with the aim of "tarnishing the image of India" and collaborated with pro-Khalistani elements, Delhi Police officials said Monday.

Non-bailable warrants have been issued against lawyer Nikita Jacob and engineer Shantanu Muluk, who are absconding. On January 11, 15 days ahead of the Republic Day violence in the national capital, the two attended a Zoom meeting organised by pro-Khalistani group Poetic Justice Foundation, said Joint Commissioner of Police (Cyber) Prem Nath.

The meeting decided the modalities to create the toolkit titled "Global Farmer Strike" and "Global Day of Action, 26 January", Nath said at a press conference.

As the case added layers, polarising views on social media and outside, officials said they are also probing an ISI element through a man called Peter Friedrich whose name is on the document and who is known to be associated with an operative of the organisation.

Ravi, Jacob and Muluk created the toolkit and sent it to others, officials alleged as a fierce political debate broke out between the opposition and the ruling BJP over the action against 21-year-old Ravi in the case related to the "toolkit Google doc", which came to light when it was shared by global climate campaigner Greta Thunberg.

According to Nath, the email account created by Shantanu is the



TOOLKIT ROW

- Delhi Police claimed Disha Ravi sent the "toolkit" to Greta Thunberg through Telegram app and also coaxed her to act on it
- Thunberg shared the "toolkit" to lend her support to the farmers' agitation against the three farm reform laws

"owner" of the Google document and PPF founder Mo Dhaliwal had contacted them through a Canada-based woman called Punit.

"Disha, Shantanu and Nikita created and edited the toolkit. Disha sent the toolkit to Greta Thunberg through Telegram. Disha deleted a Whatsapp group which she created to spread the toolkit. Due procedure was followed when Disha was arrested," Nath said.

"The toolkit was aimed at tarnishing the image of India," he added and described the toolkit as a dynamic document with hyperlinks to Google docs, "a lot of which are 'pro-Khalistani'". The police claimed that Ravi "coaxed" teen activist Thunberg to act on it. Ravi was arrested from Bangalore Saturday and sent to police remand for five days by a Delhi court Sunday with officials claiming she was an editor of the "toolkit Google doc" and "key conspirator" in its formulation and dissemination.

4 mid-sized PSBs to be put on block

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 15: The government has shortlisted four mid-sized state-run banks for privatisation, under a new push to sell state assets and shore up government revenues, three government sources said.

Privatisation of the banking sector, which is dominated by state-run behemoths with hundreds of thousands of employees, is politically risky because it could put jobs at risk but Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration aims to make a start with second-tier banks.

The four banks on the shortlist are Bank of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and the Central Bank of India, two officials



told Reuters on condition of anonymity as the matter is not yet public. Two of those banks will be selected for sale in the 2021/2022 fiscal, the officials said. The shortlist has not previously been reported. The government is considering mid-sized to small banks for

SELLING ASSETS

- Bank of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and the Central Bank of India will be privatized
- Two of those banks will be selected for sale in the 2021/2022 financial year which begins in April
- BoI has a workforce of about 50,000, CBI 33,000 while IOB employs 26,000 and BoM has about 13,000 staff

its first round of privatisation to test the waters. In the coming years it could also look at some of the country's bigger banks, they said.

The government, however, will continue to hold a majority stake in India's largest lender State Bank of India, which is seen as a 'strategic

bank' for implementing initiatives such as expanding rural credit. A finance ministry spokesman declined to comment on the matter.

India's deepest economic contraction on record caused by the pandemic is driving the push for bolder reforms, economists say. The government also wants to overhaul a banking sector reeling under a heavy load of non-performing assets, which may rise further once banks are allowed to categorise loans that soured during the pandemic as bad. PM Modi's office initially wanted four banks to be put up for sale in the coming fiscal, but officials have advised caution fearing resistance from unions representing the employees.

BYCULLA REOPENS



A Royal Bengal Tiger walks inside an enclosure at the Byculla Zoo in Mumbai, Monday. The zoo reopened Monday after 11 months of closure due to the pandemic

Servitor hurt after being hit by colleague

AGENCIES

Puri, Feb 15: The Hastidwar (northern gate) of the Jagannath Temple in Puri had stains of blood Monday after a servitor was attacked by one of his colleagues. The injured servitor has been hospitalized.

Damodar Gochhikar, a 'Jatri Sahayak' servitor, was on duty at the northern gate of the temple Monday. He stopped Ramakrushna Khuntia, a 'Suara' servitor, from entering into the shrine with clay pots known as kudua.

Following the directions issued by the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJT), Gochhikar stopped Khuntia and asked him to enter the temple from Ashwadwara (southern gate). Thus, the two servitors entered into a verbal duel.



Losing his cool, Khuntia attacked Gochhikar with a 'kudua' on his forehead. Fellow servitors immediately rushed him to the district headquarters hospital (DHH) where he is undergoing treatment.

Sources said the Singhadwar police station has lodged a case and launched a probe. As per the tradition, if blood spills on the temple floor, the servitors perform Maha Snana (the purification of the temple).

WhatsApp may be big, but people value privacy more: SC

AGENCIES

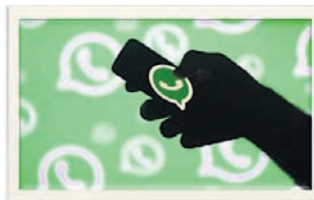
New Delhi, Feb 15: People have grave apprehensions on loss of privacy, the Supreme Court said on Monday, making it clear that it is the court's duty to protect this right as it heard an application against WhatsApp's new privacy policy.

The observation came as senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing petitioner Karmanya Singh Sareen, sought direction to restrain WhatsApp from implementing its new privacy policy in India.

"They have come up with new differentiating privacy policy for the Europeans and different set of

rules applicable to Indians," Divan argued. He added that till the time new data protection law comes into force in India, WhatsApp should not bring its new privacy policy. At this, Chief Justice SA Bobde replied: "We will issue notice in the matter."

A bench, headed by the Chief Justice and comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian, told counsel for WhatsApp: "People have grave apprehensions about loss of privacy. You may be 2 or 3 trillion dollar company, but people value their privacy more than your money... we have to protect people's privacy." The top court issued notice to



WhatsApp and Facebook on this plea against its new privacy policy.

Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Arvind Datar, appearing for WhatsApp, strongly contested Divan's argument, saying that the Delhi High Court is already seized of the matter.

Sibal said that Europe has a dif-

ferent set of data privacy laws, and WhatsApp's new privacy policy for India is similar to policy applicable in the US, Australia and other countries. "The fact is that this policy is applicable to the rest of the world except Europe.. In Europe, it is different because they have a special law," he argued.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the right to privacy is a fundamental right and they cannot compromise with the privacy of people.

Divan cited that WhatsApp has already delayed the implementation of its new privacy policy till May 15 this year and sought a notice which

is returnable before this date. The bench said it is impressed with Divan's submission that while the Data Protection Bill is about to be brought into force, WhatsApp is framing a policy to share data. Datar also said that the messages are encrypted end to end. The top court directed WhatsApp and Facebook to file their statement contesting the contentions in the present application.

The Chief Justice told WhatsApp counsel that people think if a message is sent from a person to another and then to a third person, the whole thing is disclosed to Facebook.

As counsel contended that this is not happening, Chief Justice Bobde

disagreed, saying that they are telling information heard and read through news reports, and if WhatsApp disagrees, it should clarify this on oath.

The top court noted that it will have to consider if a similar petition, pending before the Delhi High Court, is maintainable when the apex court's constitution bench is already seized with the matter wherein WhatsApp's 2016 privacy policy has been challenged. After a detailed hearing in the matter, the top court issued notices to WhatsApp, Facebook and the Centre in the matter and fixed for further hearing after four weeks.

Now, CS writes to Centre for NMA bylaws withdrawal

BJP RAISES OBJECTION TO HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT WORK UNDERTAKEN AT EKAMRA KSHETRA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The state government has once again urged the Centre to immediately withdraw the draft heritage bylaws issued by National Monuments Authority (NMA) relating to Shree Ananta Basudev and Shree Brahmeswar temples of Ekamra Kshetra here.

This time, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra has written to Union Culture secretary Raghavendra Singh, Monday. Earlier, the Lingaraj Temple Trust Board and Endowment Commissioner have written to the NMA member secretary for immediate withdrawal of the draft bylaws relating to Ekamra Kshetra.

The NMA had published draft notification of heritage bylaws for Puri Srimandir along with Ananta Basudev and Brahmeswar temples of Bhubaneswar. Following a hue and cry, the heritage bylaws related to the Srimandir has been with-



Brahmeswar temple

Mahapatra suggested the NMA to have a stakeholder consultation including sevayats, temple administration and the state government on these sensitive temple matters



Ananta Basudev temple

drawn by the NMA.

However, the draft notification for Ekamra Kshetra temples are still in force causing distress to the Sevayat community, people at large and devotees, Mahapatra said.

"There have been frequent agitations regarding the non-withdrawal of these draft notifications and there is serious apprehension that this will lead to widespread agitation and disturb the day-to-day rituals in the temples," he said, adding,

"This kind of atmosphere in temples is bound to hurt the religious sentiments of lakhs of devotees."

It is important to have a peaceful atmosphere and full cooperation of sevayats for conduct of the upcoming annual Maha Shivarati festival (March 11) when lakhs of devotees from all over the state would congregate, the Chief Secretary said.

Therefore, the state government has strongly recommended the

Union government for immediate withdrawal of the draft bylaws relating to the two city temples.

Mahapatra has also suggested the NMA to have a stakeholder consultation including sevayats, temple administration and the state government on these sensitive temple matters where the living deity and rituals are interlinked.

Meanwhile, political slugfest over the issue continued in the state. BJP leader and Bhubaneswar MP

Aparajita Sarangi said, "The draft bylaws for five monuments have been posted on the website to invite objections/suggestions. If there is any objection, the state government should file objections. What is the meaning of withdrawal of draft bylaws?"

She claimed that the heritage bylaws are intended to help the general public by streamlining the norms for taking up reconstruction/renovation activities in the restricted areas.

On the allegation that Centre had not taken the state agencies into confidence while preparing the draft bylaws, Sarangi slammed the state government agencies for not taking central agencies like ASI into confidence while taking up the demolition drive in Ekamra Kshetra.

Despite repeated attempt from the ASI and NMA, the state government had refused to share any architectural plan or detailed project report, she alleged.

Allocation for WODC to touch ₹200 crore

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The budgetary allocation for Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) will be doubled from the financial year 2021-22.

Reviewing various projects and programmes being implemented by the WODC through virtual platform Monday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik directed the officials concerned to double the allocation for the council.

The budgetary allocation of the Western Odisha Development Council has been increased from ₹3 crore (1999-2000) to ₹100 crore. Following the order of the CM, the state government's grant to the council will touch ₹200 crore in the year 2021-22.

Similarly, Patnaik has directed the officials to focus on creation of more employment opportunities for the youths. He also instructed to open offices of the



Patnaik has asked the officials to focus on creation of more jobs for the youths

WODC in all 10 districts and Athamallik sub-division of Angul district for monitoring and early completion of projects in the region.

It was decided in the meeting to expedite the ongoing major projects of WODC and complete them in time. Newly appointed chairman Asit Tripathy made detailed presentation of the ongoing programmes and future action plan of the council.

Centre releases ₹3,584 crore so far to meet GST shortfall

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 15: The Union government has so far released ₹3,584.17 crore to Odisha to meet the GST compensation shortfall.

The Centre has also allowed ₹2,858 crore additional borrowings to the state to meet GST compensation shortfall to help them mobilise additional financial resources.

According to Finance ministry sources, ₹5,000 crore has been released as back-to-back loan to states to meet the GST compensation shortfall as 16th weekly instalment Monday.

The Centre had set up a special borrowing window in October this year to meet the estimated shortfall of ₹1.10 lakh crore in revenue arising on account of implementation of GST

₹5,000 crore was released as back-to-back loan to states to meet GST shortfall as 16th weekly instalment Monday

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the GST Council. The Finance ministry said that the remaining five states, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim do not have a gap in revenue on account of GST implementation.

The ministry also said that till now 86 per cent of the total estimated GST compensation shortfall has been released to the states and UTs with legislative assem-

blies. "Out of this, an amount of ₹86,729.93 crore has been released to the states and ₹8,270.07 crore has been released to the three UTs with legislative assemblies," the Finance ministry said.

Significantly, the Centre had set up a special borrowing window in October this year to meet the estimated shortfall of ₹1.10 lakh crore in revenue arising on account of implementation of GST. The Finance ministry said that the borrowings are being done through this window on behalf of the states and UTs.

"The amount has been borrowed this week at an interest rate of 4.6480 per cent. So far, an amount of ₹95,000 crore has been borrowed by the Central government through the special borrowing window at an average interest rate of 4.7831 per cent," the ministry said.

SARASWATI PUJA TODAY



An artisan gives finishing strokes to the clay idols of goddess Saraswati in Puri, Monday

OP PHOTO

INDO-PAK WAR VETERAN BK MAHAPATRA DIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Major General (retired) Basant Kumar Mahapatra, who had participated in 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars, died at a hospital here Monday, family sources said. He was 87.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan condoled the death of the army veteran.

"Odisha mourns the sad demise of its illustrious son, Major General (Retd) Basant Kumar Mahapatra. The war veteran participated in many major battles the country has fought. He will always be remembered for his bravery, contribution to education & philanthropic activities. #RIP," Patnaik said on Twitter.

Mahapatra's body was taken to his residence at Chandinichowk in Cuttack, the family sources said.

6-hour agitation disrupts train services



Congress activists demonstrate in front of a stationary train in Puri. (Bottom) The agitators take out a bike rally in Bhubaneswar

OP PHOTOS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: In view of Odisha Bandh, train services in East Coast Railway have been affected partially Monday. As a result, a few trains have been controlled at different stations for a few minutes.

Agitation started at Talcher station at 6am and continued till 1pm,

at Bhubaneswar from 7am to 7:55am, at Dhenkanal from 7:30am to 8:20am, at Chhatrapur from 8:50am to 8:55am and at Puri from 10:50am to 11:15am.

Bhubaneswar-LTT Special was detained at Bhubaneswar station from 7:20am to 8am.

Bhubaneswar-Balangir Special was detained at Dhenkanal from 07:48hrs to 08:20hrs.

Koraput-Bhubaneswar Special

was detained at Dhenkanal from 07:47hrs to 08:20hrs.

Puri-Anand Vihar Special left Puri at 11:20hrs instead of its scheduled time at 11:00hrs.

Cong activist mimics Modi during fuel stir

A Congress activist in Odisha Monday resorted to a unique way of protesting against fuel price rise by dressing like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and going around on a bullock cart asking people whether petrol prices have come down or not.

The protest was witnessed in Umerkote town in Nabarangpur district during the Congress's six-

hour state-wide bandh against fuel price rise.

Loudspeakers in the Congress rally blared the recorded question from an old speech of Modi and the man with white hair and beard enacted it by lip-syncing along with hand gestures.

This unique way of protest amused residents of places through which the rally traversed.

The district witnessed a complete bandh as a large number of Congress workers led by former parliamentarian Pradip Majhi blocked roads.

All shops, schools and colleges were shut and vehicles remained off the roads in the district.



State sees Covid-19 fatality after 6 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: State's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3,36,262 Monday as 88 more people tested positive for the infection, while one fresh fatality pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,911, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

As many as 51 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 37 infections were detected during contact tracing, said the official.

Sundargarh district reported the highest number of new cases at 27, followed by Bargarh (10) and Puri (nine).

"Regret to inform the demise of a 74-year-old male Covid positive patient of Sambalpur district who expired due to cardiogenic shock," the H&FW department tweeted.

The state had reported its previous coronavirus fatality February 8. Fifty-three coronavirus patients

have died due to comorbidities so far.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, has so far reported the highest number of fatalities at 336, followed by Ganjam (248) and Sundargarh (173).

The state now has 661 active cases, while 3,33,637 people have recovered from the disease so far.

Odisha has so far tested over 80.43 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 19,839 Sunday.

The H&FW department has extended the Covid vaccination drive till February 25 to ensure 100 per cent coverage of all health workers in the state.

Odisha had achieved 85 per cent vaccination coverage in the first phase till Saturday. As the state failed to achieve 100 per cent Covid-19 vaccination coverage, the Centre extended the deadline for the completion of first dose vaccination of all healthcare workers.

Pvt firms can now buy 500 acre in rural areas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The state government has relaxed norms for private companies to buy private land through negotiation with the land owner.

Revenue and Disaster Management department has issued a notification in this regard, Monday. Now, the private companies can purchase land up to 500 acres through negotiation with owner of the land in rural areas.

Earlier, it was stipulated up to 200 acres of dry land or equivalent areas of irrigated land or wet lands

Private companies can buy 100 acres in urban areas which was earlier limited to 50 acres only

in rural areas. Similarly, private companies can buy 100 acres in urban areas, which was earlier limited to 50 acres only. Provisions of rehabilitation and resettlement under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 will not be applicable for such deal.

Curtains down on Guru Debaprasad Award fest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: The 14th Guru Debaprasad Das Award Festival concluded Monday on a high note. The closing ceremony of this grand celebration began with the traditional lighting of the lamp by the guests, Achyuta Samanta, MP and founder of KIIT/KISS; Prafulla Kumar Samal, MLA; Debi Prasad Mishra, MLA; Bishnupada Sethi, Principal Secretary, Odia Language, Literature & Culture Dept; Dr. Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi, Former Vice Chancellor, Sambalpur University; Simanchala Panda, working President, Tridhara and Guru Gajendra Kumar Panda,



director, Tridhara. The ceremony commenced with the presentation of the prestigious Guru Debaprasad Prativa Award

2020 to Guru Manoj Kumar Behera, Guru Prativa Panda, Guru Binod Chandra Sahu and Guru Palomi Mandal for their contributions to-

wards the field of dance and music. After the award ceremony, internationally acclaimed Odissi dancer Guru Aruna Mohanty pre-

sented solo Odissi dance 'Biswa Prakash' - Illuminating the universe - based on Bhima Bhoi's poetry. The dance was choreographed by Guru Aruna Mohanty, concept and text design by Kedar Mishra, music composition by Guru Gopal Chandra Panda and rhythm composition by Guru Bijaya Kumar Barik.

The next item was Mohiniyattam presented by Central Sangeet Natak Academy Awardee Bidushi Gopika Varma. She presented Bhajana 'Bisleswar Darshan Kar Chal Man Tu Kashi' written by Maharaja Swami Tirunala. The last presentation of the concluding evening was Sattriya Dance by Guru Ghanakanta Bora and Dr. Anwesha Mahanta.

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Government of Odisha

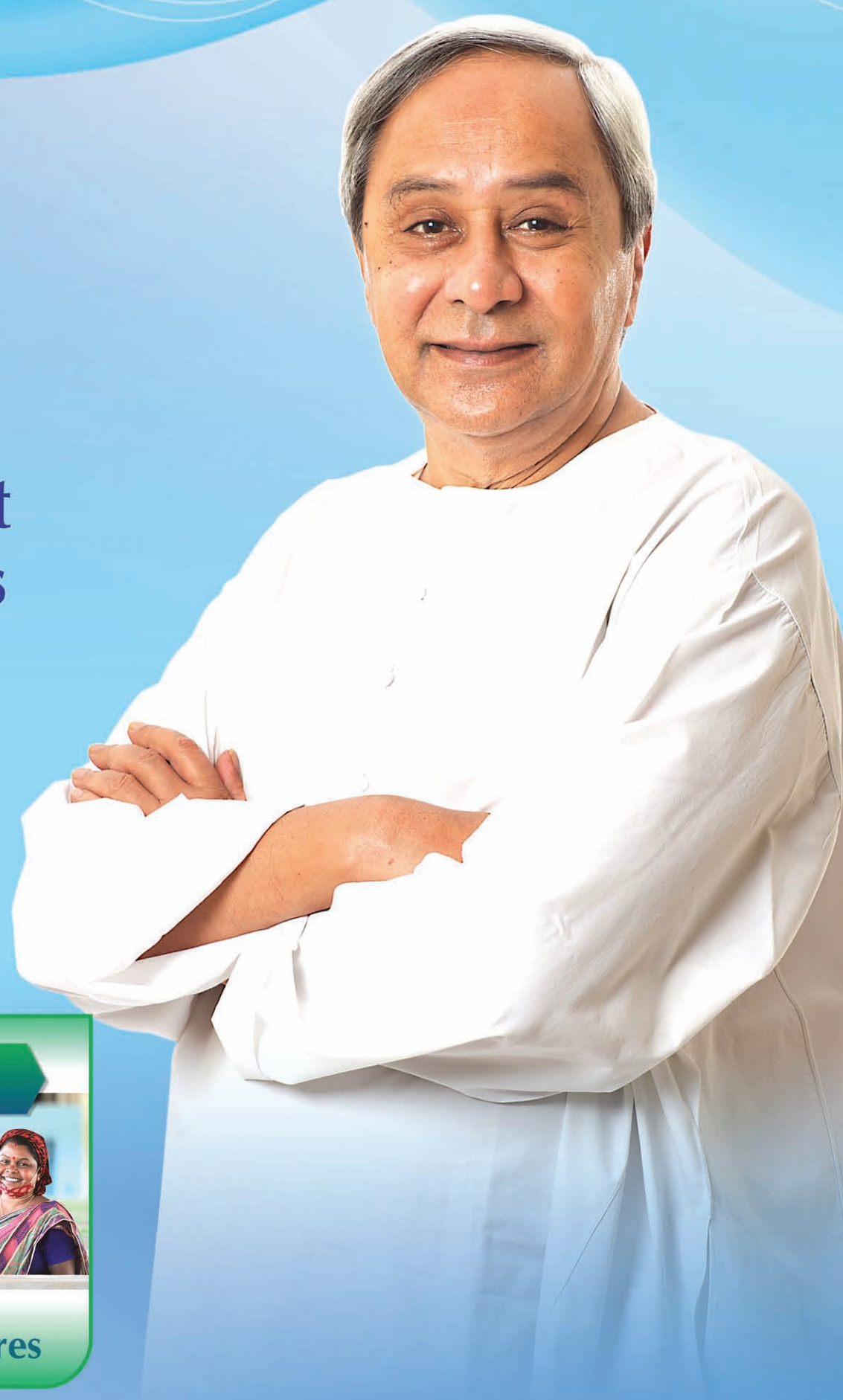
Odisha's different identity

SUNDARGARH


now in the next level of development

Launching of

Infrastructure Development Projects worth 4915 Crores




Drinking Water




1611 Crores

Irrigation




320 Crores

Health Services



111 Crores

Roads & Bridges



1060 Crores

Education




366 Crores

Sanitation




250 Crores

Livelihood Initiatives




216 Crores

Smart City Development




471 Crores

Electricity




38 Crores

Infrastructure Development




67 Crores

Women & Child Care



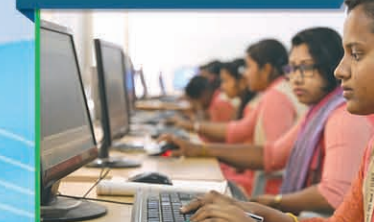
135 Crores

Clean Environment



12 Crores

Skill Development



15 Crores

Sports Infrastructure



120 Crores

by

Shri Naveen Patnaik

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

16th February 2021 || 9.30AM
Rourkela

FOCUS DEMOCRACY

VOLUNTEERS VS VIGILANTES



Asking citizens to volunteer in the enterprise of national development by making individual sacrifices is one thing. But asking volunteers to secretly spy on fellow citizens, become de-facto vigilantes without any accountability, is quite another

to be no accountability for their actions and they can end up being secret police reporting and rattling on the people. Such enlistment takes the notion of a "surveillance state" into a dark territory. It is undoubtedly true that the social media has been excessively infected with hate speech, and speech which can incite violence, bigotry and cause disorder. But it is up to the State to set up mechanisms to regulate content on social media, and indeed this is the way things are evolving in many countries. Also it is up to the State to identify those responsible for criminal offenses on social media and cannot ask volunteers to do this job. Moreover, curtailing hate speech is always a dicey proposition as it should not end up infringing on the fundamental right to free speech. Hence, it cannot be left to private citizens who may have an incentive to wrongfully implicate others. Another related development is a recent facility launched by the Income Tax department. This allows people to provide a tip-off about undisclosed foreign assets, benami properties or tax evasion. There is now a link on the e-filing portal of the department and it also allows the informer to remain anonymous. A unique complaint number is generated. This too has shades of a surveillance State going down a slippery road. It is not again a case of the State passing on its function of chasing tax-evaders to informers who may be motivated by malice? Asking citizens to volunteer in the giant enterprise of national development by making individual sacrifices or through positive actions like donations is one thing. But asking volunteers to secretly or anonymously spy on fellow citizens, become de-facto vigilantes and help in law-enforcement without any accountability, is quite another. It will lead to greater distrust and fear. The very foundation of a robustly functioning democracy is a high degree of social capital and trust. Let us not jeopardise that.

The author is an economist and Senior Fellow, **Takshashila Institution.**
THE BILLION PRESS

In his inaugural address as the 35th President of the United States America on January 20, 1961, John F Kennedy spoke these famous words, "ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country". This was the call by a charismatic leader for public action. Kennedy appealed to Americans to think beyond themselves for a larger cause. In India too, we remember the appeal of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri who appealed to fellow Indians, to give up one meal a week, considering national shortages and food inflation. In response to that appeal, thousands, or millions of Indians indeed spontaneously responded, and to this day there are people who observe a weekly fast, in remembrance of that noble appeal. President A P J Abdul Kalam too launched an anti-corruption movement, especially for the youth, called "What can I give" campaign. This too was an appeal to ethical values, and the spirit of giving, rather than taking. Prime Minister Narendra Modi too often exhorts people of India, to work collectively toward national development, in a spirit of self-sacrifice and volunteerism. One of his well known campaigns was an appeal to give up LPG subsidy, especially by those who can afford to pay full market prices. This was to enable the government to provide up to 80 million free cooking gas connections to households from the lower income strata, providing considerable health benefits and empowerment, especially to women. Rather than depend only on aggregate tax collections to pay for this social scheme, the PM asked his fellow Indians who could afford, to join the enterprise. In fact the scheme also had a feature, which the donor could see where the subsidy that he or she willingly gave up had been directed. In that sense the appeal for donations for COVID relief to the PM Cares Fund too garnered significant amounts. That fund will now be used to pay for the vaccinations, as reported by the Union Health Minister. However, that fund is not subject to scrutiny under the right to information.



Ajit Ranade

THE MODERN STATE CANNOT FUNCTION BASED ON APPEALS TO THE ETHICAL AND MORAL VALUES OF CITIZENS. IT MUST ADEQUATELY PROVIDE FINANCES THAT CAN FUND VARIOUS SOCIAL SECTOR PROGRAMMES

It is by persevering that one conquers difficulties, not by running away from them. One who perseveres is sure to triumph. Victory goes to the most enduring. Always do your best and the Lord will take care of the results.



THE MOTHER

Draconian Step

Finally, it has come full circle. A young climate activist, Disha Ravi, is arrested and charged with sedition over accusations that she edited and circulated a Google doc toolkit that was also tweeted by internationally famous climate activist Greta Thunberg about the ongoing protests by farmers in India. This arrest has raised much hue and cry not just in India but also globally. Within India, many social media accounts have jumped out of their skins to support the arrest in Bengaluru by the Delhi police. These account holders most likely would never have worked on Google Docs where hundreds can edit a document across the world simultaneously. Similarly, many of them would not know what 'toolkit' implies. Yet, the charge of sedition against Disha seems acceptable to the faithful. The manner in which Disha was hounded out of her residence in Bengaluru and whisked away to Delhi by air by the Delhi Police without reportedly following due process of law involving arresting an individual is reminiscent of the dreaded knock on the door for taking a government critic into police custody during the Emergency clamped by Indira Gandhi in 1975. The irony is the BJP-led NDA government, which never misses an opportunity to bash the Congress for trampling civil liberties and perpetrating atrocities on people is now reinventing the horrors of Emergency. The arrest of Disha has all the elements of an authoritarian rule. Indira is dead and gone. Emergency is history. India had started blossoming as a healthy democracy with a vibrant and growing economy. The Indian youth had started dreaming of becoming the citizen of a nation which was to be considered a world power. The GDP showed signs of a healthy growth and a general sense of happiness had started pervading the atmosphere. The first blot on this outlook was by the former Congress-led UPA government with its intense corruption. People got irritated and not once but twice voted the corrupt Congress out. However, the promises of 'Vikas' or development through unity (sabka saath sabka vikas) first got the death-blow with demonetization in November 2016. Then onwards, all laws enacted, police actions perpetrated and suppression of free speech have started working against that very promise of Vikas. India's foreign policy has got muddled. The latest being international criticism heaped on India due to inept handling of the farmers' agitation. A government that had reached its pinnacle through social media now seems frightened of those very platforms. If Twitter can boldly put forth its point by telling the Government of India 'Let the tweets keep flowing' implies, especially after the fall of Donald Trump that India is being spoken of in the same breath as North Korea or Syria. It could also mean that internationally, the message is out that India is in hot waters, which could be followed by a possible change.

WISDOM CORNER

- People who wonder if the glass is half empty or full miss the point. The glass is refillable. **UNKNOWN**
- No one is to blame for your future situation but yourself. If you want to be successful, then become successful. **JAYMIN SHAH**
- Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle. **ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

WORDSWORTH

- Buck up**
We use it now to suggest somebody should cheer up, and not be downhearted or oppressed by circumstances. It is a phrase from nineteenth century Britain, derived from those bucks or dandies who were regarded as the acme of snappy dressing in the Regency period. (In its turn, that word came from buck in the sense of the animal, and had a slightly older meaning still that suggested male gaiety or spirit, with unobtrusive suggestions of rutting deer.) In its dandyified sense buck up first meant to dress smartly, for a man to get out of those comfortable old clothes and into something drop-dead gorgeous. Since to do so was often a fillip to the spirit, the phrase shifted sometime around the 1880s to its modern meaning. It seems to have been public school slang to start with, probably from Winchester College, and rather stiff-upper-lip British. It could suggest that the person being addressed should stop acting like a wuss, ninny or coward, as here from Edith Nesbit's The Wouldbegoods of 1901: "Be a man! Buck up!", and was something of a cliché at one time in stories of Englishmen abroad bravely facing adversity. From the early years of the twentieth century, it could also be an injunction on somebody to get a move on or hurry up; here's an example, from D H Lawrence's Sons and Lovers of 1913: "Half-past eight!" he said. "We'd better buck up!"
- Bug**
The most common version of this story is that bug results from an incident with the US Navy's Harvard Mark II computer soon after the end of World War Two, in which a technician cured a fault by extracting a moth from between the contacts of a relay in the system. It is also said that this was the source of debug, the process of finding and removing errors from a computer programme. The incident really did happen: the log book, dated 9 September 1947, survives with the actual moth taped to it and is available online; that page says it happened in 1945 but recent research shows it actually happened two years later. The log entry itself blows to pieces the story about this being the origin of bug by noting under the insect, "First actual case of bug being found". This makes it clear that bug for a fault was already in use. Indeed, Rear Admiral Grace Hopper (an early programmer who worked on the machine and who inspired the computer language COBOL) used to tell this story in lectures and would remark that the word was applied to problems in radar electronics in World War II. It's actually older still. An early recorded use is in reference to the inventor Thomas Alva Edison and appeared in the Pall Mall Gazette in 1889: "Mr. Edison, I was informed, had been up the two previous nights discovering 'a bug' in his phonograph — an expression for solving a difficulty, and implying that some imaginary insect has secreted itself inside and is causing all the trouble". I've been assured by one of the editors of Edison's papers that the word was commonly used in his notebooks from the 1870s to describe a problem. It seems it wasn't new even with him: an electrical handbook of 1896 suggests it had long been used by telegraphers to suggest that electromechanical glitches were caused by bugs getting into the cables. Debug is also recorded before the moth incident: a writer in the Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society in 1945 wrote "It ranged from the pre-design development of essential components, through the stage of type test and flight test and 'debugging' right through to later development of the engine."

SPECTRUM US POLITICS

The drama of impeachment

The American drama of "Donald Trump's impeachment" is over and he is acquitted. He is no longer the President. Therefore, the US Senate decided it has no authority to convict him. In a way the whole thing was more of a political drama than an actual trial. The verdict was known before the trial began. It was a strictly party line vote. Seven Republican senators joined their Democratic counterparts; still there was no two-thirds majority to convict Trump. The Democratic majority in the House of Delegates found that Donald Trump as President committed "high crime and misdemeanor". They brought it to the Senate for trial. Very shrewdly, Mitch McConnell, the majority leader put the trial off for a few days. A special election in the state of Georgia was coming up. Any negative comments about the President or the party during the trial could influence the voters negatively. So he hid for time. However, Georgia chose two Democratic senators and McConnell lost his job. In his explanation to the world, McConnell said after the trial that "Trump is practically and morally responsible for the incitement"

Anadi Naik

THE AMERICAN DRAMA OF "DONALD TRUMP'S IMPEACHMENT" IS OVER AND HE IS ACQUITTED. HE IS NO LONGER THE PRESIDENT. THEREFORE, THE US SENATE DECIDED IT HAS NO AUTHORITY TO CONVICT HIM

that happened at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. It was the result of his "disgraceful dereliction of duty," he said. Yet, he had not tried to persuade any of his fellow Republicans to vote to convict Trump. For five consecutive days the drama of impeachment played out on national media. People everywhere for one more time watched the vivid pictures of the mob attacking the US Capitol. There was plenty of argument from both sides. Finally when it came to vote against a President who caused all that havoc, it was the need for survival that prevailed. Right now, Trump is sitting on \$340 million that he can use for any public purpose he wants to. Out of this, \$70 million, left over from his previous election, he can use for his own election or the election of whosoever he chooses. The rest of the money was collected from his supporters who wanted to help him to overturn the election result. He could spend that money any way he wants. Republican senators are afraid that should they vote against him he could set up candidates against them in the primary or could urge his supporters to vote against them. After all,

74 million Americans voted for Donald Trump. This is a number, higher than what he secured last time, no Republican presidential candidate had ever reached before. Joe Biden got 85 million and beat him because of a meticulous Voters Registration Strategy among the Blacks in the South. The trial and its result prove that Trump represents a mindset in America that is in danger of fading. Neither science nor reality is able to sustain it. Yet, millions hold on to that mindset because it is convenient and they are used to it. Trump has tapped into their frustration and anger. To coal miners he promised to reopen the closed coal mines. To the idle workers at towns of old steel mills he promised to reopen them. When that could not happen he blamed bureaucrats who nitpicked on everything in the name of law and rules. He accused immigrants and China for the debacles of the rust-belt. Losing their familiar jobs and seeing their small towns rot in neglect, this section of Americans needed to blame somebody for their misfortune. Trump channels their anger for them and they love it. The senators who were to judge Trump, especially from deep red states, could

not escape the fact that should they convict him; they will remain forever guilty in the hearts of their constituents who so overwhelmingly voted for Trump. They could not risk their careers. The drama of the Donald Trump impeachment shows that democracy is fragile thing. Had Trump had any ally in the American military, he would have been the President today. But the military to its credit, remained true to its oath. The House of Delegates did the right thing by accusing him of insurrection and incitement through impeachment. However, the fundamental tenets of democracy, peaceful transfer of power, were never in doubt. Joe Biden became the 46th President of the United States and Trump was dumped into history. There has been no precedence of trial by the Senate of an American President after he left his job. He or she can be tried in a regular court. Yes, there was a riot and four tragic deaths occurred. But the fundamentals of the democratic order of the United States was never in any danger.

The writer lives in the USA. He can be reached acnaik@aol.com

Contract farming

Sir, Some people advocate that "contract farming" will double farmers' incomes and make them richer. Is this really true? PepsiCo, which produces beverages, also makes potato chips. Usually potatoes are not of same size, but where does PepsiCo get the same size potatoes from? In fact, Pepsi has signed contracts with farmers and is giving them special seeds. Farmers are producing these special potatoes and can only sell them to PepsiCo. For the past 10 years, farmers in Punjab have been cultivating potatoes through contract farming and selling those potatoes only to Pepsi and the company is making profits. Big farmers say contract farming is good for them, but the small farmers suffer. Private companies want to do business with big farmers, because they have large lands. Due to this big companies do not agree to work with the small farmers because the cost increases due to the small size of their land. The higher the cost, the lower the profit. In such a situation, the big farmers are leasing land from the small farmers and signing contracts with companies. It is clear that small farmers are being affected by "contract farming". There is another problem with small farmers. They buy Pepsi seeds from the market and cultivate potatoes without any contract with the company, but Pepsi does not buy those products because they do not have a contract with the company. The incident took place with nine farmers in Gujarat. They produced potato crops without a contract and sold them in the market. Pepsi filed a lawsuit against them. Each farmer was fined ₹1 crore. At the same time, the farmers' unions agitated for them and forced Pepsi to roll back. Why did Pepsi do this? "If everyone grows potatoes with their seeds, anyone can buy them, make chips and sell them in the market, and it will hurt Pepsi. It is clear that Pepsi wants to do a monopoly on the market. What does the new agricultural policy formulated by the government say about "contract farming"? If there is a dispute between the company and the farmers in contract farming, the farmers cannot go to court. Everything will be decided in the SDM tribunal. This is where the fear of the peasants lies, for which they are going against the new farm laws.



Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

LOL Six or seven cats?



Teacher: "If I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2, how many would you have?" Johnny: "Seven." Teacher: "No, listen carefully... If I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?" Johnny: "Seven." Teacher: "Let me put it to you differently. If I gave you two apples, and another two apples and another two, how many would you have?" Johnny: "Six." Teacher: "Good. Now if I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?" Johnny: "Seven!" Teacher: "Johnny, where in the heck do you get seven from?!" Johnny: "Because I've already got a freaking cat!"

Urea black marketing ails Bargarh farmers

KNOWN AS THE RICE BOWL OF THE STATE, FARMERS HERE SUFFER DUE TO SHORTAGE OF UREA DURING THE PEAK PERIOD OF RABI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Feb 15: Agriculture sector in Bargarh district, which is known as the rice bowl of the state, is always plagued with uncertainty as farmers are hit by scarcity of urea when cultivation works pick up in the district, a report said.

Farmers were found to have completed sowing of seeds and even planting of saplings in many part of the district. However, black marketing of urea by some profit mongering traders has led to an artificial scarcity and hit the farmers hard when they need the fertilizer most to make further progress in their cultivation work. This has pushed the farmers into distress and forced them to buy them by the fertilizer at an high rate for their cultivation works.

Observers say a packet of urea weighing 45 kg costs Rs 265. However, the profit mongering and unscrupulous traders are selling a packet of urea anything between Rs 300 to 350.



OBSERVERS SAY A PACKET OF UREA WEIGHING 45 KG COSTS ₹265

HOWEVER, THE PROFIT MONGERING AND UNSCRUPULOUS TRADERS ARE SELLING A PACKET OF UREA ANYTHING BETWEEN ₹300 TO 350

Sources said paddy is cultivated on 1,59,000 hectare of land for the Rabi season for which farmers need 24,000 mt of urea fertilizer to raise

their crops. However, only 12,000 mt of urea fertilizer has reached the district. The primary agriculture cooperative societies are also facing fertilizer shortage as the district has received less than the required quantity of fertilizer.

Taking advantage of the situation, licenced sellers are allegedly selling the fertilizer to the farmers at a much higher rate than the actual market price.

A farmer Surendra Kathar of

Jamtikra alleged that he purchased a packet of urea fertilizer from a trader at Rengali camp, February 9. The trader sold the packet to him at Rs 300 but did not give him any receipt.

Later, he received a SMS on his mobile phone where Rs 265 was mentioned as the price of the urea packet. Later, Kathar lodged a written complaint with the assistant agriculture officer at Atabira in this regard. A farmer Dayanidhi Karna of Godbhaga alleged that a packet of urea is being sold at Rs 350 at Atabira, Godbhaga and Larambha areas in the district.

When contacted, the chief district agriculture officer (CDAO) Dinabandhu Gandhi said an additional 12,000 mt of urea fertilizer is required for the district. However, as regard to black marketing of the fertilizer, his department will investigate the unscrupulous traders. He assured of action if any farmer files a complaint before him regarding black marketing of urea fertilizer.

CLEANING THE MESS



Forest officials remove banners and posters pinned with nails on trees on roadside of national highway under Daringbadi and Simanbadi forest areas in Kandhamal district, Monday

COMING FROM WRONG SIDE, VAN RUNS OVER MINOR GIRLS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Feb 15: A pick-up van, allegedly plying on the wrong side of a road, ran over two minor girls and left another critical under Baji Chowk flyover bridge in the district headquarters town, Monday.

The minor girls were sleeping under the flyover at Baji Chowk when the vehicle ran over them after coming from the wrong side. The deceased were identified as Saina Kherwar, 5, and Suhana Kherwar, 6, daughters of Santosh Kherwar of Rohtas district in Bihar. The driver of the van fled the scene after the mishap.

A 10-year-old girl Pami, who was also present there, sustained critical injuries in the mishap and admitted to the district headquarters hospital for treatment.

Reports said that the two de-

ceased girls belong to nomadic community whose family members earn livelihood by selling honey and raisins in the town. The mishap occurred when the family members were away on their work. The van was carrying a generator for marriage feast when the mishap occurred.

Tension sparked in the area as Town Police Station officials led by IIC Namita Nayak rushed to the spot and controlled the situation after placating the irate family members and locals. Later, Sadar Tehsildar and SDPO joined them and took stock of the situation.

The Sadar SDPO Sriharsha Mishra said that a pick-up van ran over the people from Banjara community when they were under the flyover bridge. Two minor girls were killed while another sustained critical injuries and is undergoing

treatment. The situation is now under control, he said.

When questioned about the preventive measures that could be taken to avoid recurrence of such mishaps, the SDPO said that police personnel will keep a watch and ensure that no vehicle plies on the wrong side. The bereaved family was given away Rs 20,000 from the district Red-Cross fund and promise of free treatment for the injured girl, the Tehsildar said.

In a separate road mishap, two persons were killed while 25 others were injured after a pick-up van they were in overturned near Krishna Square under Komna police limits in Nuapada district Monday. The mishap occurred when the van driver was returning with the passengers after attending a marriage function.

Cong's 'lone wolf' in Junagarh participates in 6-hr bandh call

No worker except one showed up to participate in the Odisha bandh call in Kalahandi's Junagarh which was once a Congress party's bastion

POST NEWS NETWORK

Junagarh, Feb 15: The Congress party had given a six-hour bandh call against the sharp rise in fuel prices, but a majority of the party workers and leaders staying away from the bandh call has dealt a heavy blow to the grand old party in this town, Monday.

The Congress workers supported the bandh call and enforced closure of the shops and plying of vehicles in various parts of Kalahandi district. However, Junagarh town which was earlier known as the stronghold of the party threw up a different picture with only a lone



party worker participating in bandh call while others ignored the call and stayed away. This has sent the chatters abuzz in the area.

The party leaders were left red-faced as none of the party workers participated in the bandh call with only a lone worker seen holding the party flag and calling people to observe the bandh. Normal life and traffic in the town remained as usual while all the business establishment remained open with all the party workers and leaders staying away from the bandh call except one.

1 dead, 3 hurt as car falls off bridge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, Feb 15: A person was killed and three others injured critically after the car they were travelling in, fell off a bridge at Pitakalia village on the Soro-Kupari road in Balasure district Monday.

The identities of the deceased and injured persons are yet to be ascertained. However, it was learnt that the four occupants of the ill-fated car were returning from a marriage function.

According to a source, after attending the marriage ceremony in Jajpur district the four, including the driver, were returning to Aghirapada village under Oupada block of Balasure district.

As the car was passing over the Pitakalia bridge, a motorcyclist suddenly came in front of the vehicle. In his attempt to save the motorcyclist, the driver steered the vehicle to one side and lost control. It led to the mishap.

Locals informed the police. Police were prompt in reaching the accident site. They rescued the injured persons and got them admitted to the Soro Government hospital.

EYE CHECK-UP



An eye check-up camp underway at Khireitangiri in Keonjhar district to mark the National Road Safety Month, Monday

6 months on, cops still clueless in Pihu missing case

As a part of their search operation, the police dried up a pond near the girl's house Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Binjharpur, Feb 15: Six months have passed since two-year-old Pihu went missing from near her house at Madhusudanpur village in Jajpur district. But the police are yet to get any breakthrough in the case.

Pihu has been missing since August 9, 2020.

Meanwhile, Binjharpur police, seeking cooperation from people, have intensified the search operation. They have put up posters at different locations and announced Rs 20,000 cash reward to anyone who provides information regarding



Pihu's disappearance. To share information, two mobile phone numbers (8763137726, 9437373737) are also provided on the poster. To trace out the girl, five investigating teams have already been formed.

As a part of its search operation, the police had dried up a pond near the girl's house Sunday.

According to sources, Monalisha Nayak, Pihu's mother, is a native of Madhusudanpur village under Binjharpur police limits in Jajpur district. Her in-laws' house is at a village under Nayakanidhi police limits in Bhadrak district. Due to some reasons, she along with her daughter has been staying at her parents' house in Madhusudanpur village.

It was around 3:00 pm August 9 last year, Pihu was last seen by her maternal grandfather playing with her friends near the house. Later, when Monalisha came out to feed Pihu, she did not find her anywhere. The fam-

ily members launched a frantic search for her at all the possible places including the ponds and wells in the village but to no avail.

They lodged a missing report at Binjharpur police station August 14. IIC Niranjan Sabar had visited the village and talked with the neighbours and villagers. Jajpur SP Rahul P R recently visited Binjharpur to review the progress of investigation into the case.

While the police are yet to get any breakthrough in the case, several political and social organisations have been demanding that the police intensify the investigation.

Here, puppetry survived digital onslaught

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Feb 15: Puppetry is synonymous with Dhenkanal district. The availability of all sorts of modern forms of entertainment these days notwithstanding, the puppets dancing on string ends are hugely popular. The people's love for this art form is seen to be believed.

There are 14 traditional art forms in Dhenkanal district. String puppet dance is one of them. There are over 18 puppet dance troupes in the district and all of them are active. If this ancient art form is still surviving the onslaught of film, TV, internet, mobile phones and web series, it is due to the tireless efforts of some master performers like Guru Raghunath Pradhan, Sushant Dhal, Nabakishore Dhal, Binay Dhal, Rabi Jena, Gagan Dhal, Bhagirathy Sahu, Braj Dhal and Kailas Jena. They are earning their livelihood from staging puppet shows on a regular basis. They have been in this profession for the last 30 to 40 years.

According to some senior Gurus, 60 years ago, the artistes from Berhampur in Ganjam district would come to Dhenkanal district. They would stay here, make puppets and organise shows. Later, the present Gurus who were then youths with little knowl-



edge of puppetry evinced interest to learn the art. Now, they are carrying on the decades-old tradition.

There are four types of puppet shows. They are 'Hand Puppet', 'String Puppet', 'Rod Puppet' and 'Shadow Puppet'. The last form is of puppet show is also known as 'Ravana Chhaya'.

Puppet shows do not need an auditorium or a hall. They can be conducted on makeshift stages also. The lifeless wooden puppets measuring between one foot and two feet come alive once they get the touches from their masters. They are made of lightweight wood. One by one, the puppets appear as per the story, mostly a mythological one, and give the audience an engrossing viewing experience. The masters not only give movements to these puppets but also produce different sounds as per the requirement.

This art form, at one point of time regarded as dying art, was given a fresh lease of life in 2011. Thanks to the effort of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik,

the Zilla, Block and Nagar Kala Sanskruti Sangha were formed to save ancient art forms from dying. And it has made a huge difference to the puppet art form.

According to District Folk Artists' Association, vice-chairman, Abani Mishra, the puppet dance of Dhenkanal district has its own identity. "Since 2011, folk art forms and songs are being used for propagating government schemes and programmes. So the puppeteers have been getting some projects and earning their livelihood," he added.

When contacted, guru Sushant Kumar Dhal of Raididhi village said, "I have been in the profession since 1972. The puppet dance has seen many ups and downs. It has its popularity but it will not fill our stomachs. Our children are not showing interest to carry on the profession as our payments are not encouraging enough. If it receives more patronage from the government, then some may come forward to keep alive the art form."

In this regard, project coordinator, Culture Department, Basudev Malabiso said, "Puppet dance is one of the popular art forms in the state. It has its own viewership. It is the best medium to carry government's messages to people."

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RWS&S DIVISION, RAIRANGPUR
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Tendering
Corrigendum Notice No. 1 to Tender Call Notice No.64 of 2020 -21
 No.O-1099: In partial modification to this office Tender Call Notice No. 64 of 2020-21, the following amendment is made.

1. The last date of bid submission in online is extended up to 17.00 hours of dt.22.02.2021.
2. The date of opening of the bid in online is modified as at 11.00 hours of dt. 23.02.2021.

All other terms and conditions remains unaltered.
Sd./-12.02.21 Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Rairangpur
 OIPR-25010/11/0033/2021

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. TENDER ONLINE SNPR- 06 OF 2020-21
No. 761
Dated. 11.02.2021
 No.O-1095:-

1. Name of the work	: Roads Works as per DTCN available in the website. www.tendersodisha.gov.in
2. Total No. of Work	: 1 (One) No.
3. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 57.76 Lakhs
4. Period of Completion	: 03 (Three) Calendar months
5. Period and time of availability of bid document in the portal for bidding	: 19.02.2021 at 11.00AM to 26.02.2021 up to 5.00 PM
6. Date and time of opening of Tender	: 01.03.2021 at 11.00AM (Technical Bid) & (Financial Bid will be intimated later on)
7. Name and address of the officer inviting bid	: E.E.R.W.Divn. Sonepur

(1) Other details can be seen from detailed notice inviting tenders, available in website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
 (2) Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the website: www.tenderodisha.gov.in
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Sonepur
 OIPR-25054/11/0008/2021

ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, L.I. DIVISION, BHUBANESWAR
e-Mail: eolicdivn.bbsr@gmail.com, Tel. - 0674-2391847
e-Procurement Notice
Re Bid Identification No. 505/2020-21 Dt.11.02.2021
 No.CAD-1269- The Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Bhubaneswar on behalf of ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED, BHUBANESWAR invites percentage Rate bids in online mode for installation & Engrisation of Lift Irrigation Projects in Puri district under BKVY in TURNKEY BASIS as mentioned below from the reputed Contractors/Firms having valid HT licence issued by E.L.B.O., Odisha and Civil licence as mentioned below.

1. Nature of work	: Execution of work for installation & Engrisation of 07 Nos. L.I. Projects in different blocks of Puri district
2. No. of packages	: 07 Nos.
3. Estimated cost	: Varies from Rs.3483704/- to Rs.3927854/-
4. Period of completion	: 90 days
5. Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal	: 18.02.2021 at 10.00 A.M.
6. Last date & time for receipt of bids in the portal	: 25.02.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.
7. Date & time of seeking clarification	: 18.02.2021 at 10.00 A.M. to 24.02.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
8. Opening date & time	: 26.02.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
9. Name & address of the officer inviting bid	: Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Bhubaneswar

The details of tender are available in the Government tender website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in and other related documents are available in the DTCN for bidding. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender will be available in the said website.
Sd./- Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Bhubaneswar
 OIPR-32155/11/0031/2021

TDP 'has lost its relevance'

YSRCP LEADERS CLAIM THAT EVEN THE LOYALISTS OF SENIOR TDP LEADERS SUCH AS AYYANAPATRU DU HAVE FAILED TO SECURE PRESENTABLE RESULTS IN THEIR CONSTITUENCIES

AGENCIES

Amaravati, Feb 15: Andhra Pradesh Municipal Administration minister and YSRCP leader Botcha Satyanarayana has claimed that opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is one step closer to obscurity after the recent 'drubbing' in the second phase of the panchayat elections.

"The TDP has lost its relevance in Andhra Pradesh and the polls prove the same," claimed Satyanarayana.

The TDP made light of the claim and said that after the second phase of counting, the TDP had won over 37 per cent of the panchayats.

According to the ruling YSRCP's leaders, even the loyalists of senior TDP leaders such as Ayyannapatrudu have failed to secure presentable results in their constituencies.

Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders claimed that the TDP managed to win only 26 of the 101 panchayats in Ayyannapatrudu's constituency, compared with YSRCP's 73 victories.

In Ichapuram constituency of TDP MLA B Ashok, the TDP allegedly won just 11 of the 98 panchayats while the ruling party bagged 83 sarpanch posts.

Likewise, in Uravakonda seat represented by TDP MLA P Keshav, YSRCP reportedly won 15 of the 19 panchayats, restricting the TDP to wins on just four sarpanch posts.

In Raptadu, the constituency of former TDP Minister Paritala Sunita, YSRCP leaders claimed they won 45 of the 58 panchayats, relegating TDP to just 12.

Similarly, in Janaganapalle constituency, from where TDP's Bejjan Parthasarathi hails, the ruling party's leaders claimed that the TDP won just 13 of the 102 panchayats while the YSRCP managed to win as many as 88 of them.

Showing the strength of YSRCP, party leaders claimed that the ruling party won 53 of the 67 panchayats in Jagampeta segment represented by YSRCP leader B Chanti Babu while the TDP allegedly managed to win only 14.

In Vidadala Rajini's Chilakaluripeta constituency, the YSRCP won 34 of the 51 panchayats, compared with TDP's 16 victories.

In Narsaraopeta represented by YSRCP MLA Gopireddy Srinivas Reddy, the ruling party won 47 of the 49 panchayat elections while the

PANCHAYAT POLLS



JANASENA: THE DARK HORSE

The TDP refutes the claims and says it won 952 panchayat elections, compared with the ruling party's 1,368

TDP's calculations say the BJP and Janasena alliance won only eight panchayats while the latter claims more victories

However, one thing is clear in these rural local bodies elections - Janasena has eaten into the vote share of the TDP, so much so that in some villages there were no TDP candidates to contest

TDP reportedly won only two.

In Ram Narayana Reddy's Venkatagiri constituency, the TDP won two of the 20 panchayats while the YSRCP won 18.

Meanwhile, the TDP refuted the claims and said that it won 952 panchayat elections, compared with the ruling party's 1,368. According to TDP's calculations, the BJP and Janasena alliance won only eight panchayats while the latter claims more victories.

However, one thing is clear in these rural local bodies elections - Janasena has eaten into the vote share of the TDP, so much so that in some villages there were no TDP candidates to contest.

In the first two phases of the four-phased panchayat elections, there was an impressive turnout of voters.

TDP national President Nara Chandrababu Naidu hailed the turnout as a victory of democracy.

"In the just-concluded second phase of counting, the TDP won 1,033 out of 2,778 panchayats which came to be 37.67 per cent," claimed Naidu.

Urban body polls Mar 10, counting of votes Mar 14

AGENCIES

AMARAVATI: The Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission (SEC) Monday issued a notification to resume the stalled electoral process for 87 urban local bodies, including 12 municipal corporations, with voting slated to be held March 10.

The notification pertains to the resumption of the electoral process with respect to 12 MCs as well as 75 nagar panchayats in 13 districts from the stage of 'withdrawal of candidature'.

State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar said: "With the issuance of the notification, Model Code of Conduct has come into force in the urban areas of Andhra Pradesh from Monday. It shall remain in force till the completion of the election process."

The electoral process was stopped midway in March 2020 due to coronavirus pandemic.

"The commission decided to resume the paused election process for urban local bodies from the stage where it was stopped on March 15, 2020 - from the stage of 'withdrawal of candidature'," the SEC added.

The withdrawal of candidatures will recommence from 11 am till 3 pm on March 2. The last date for withdrawal of papers is March 3, with the publication of the final lists of contestants scheduled for the same day.

The SEC will conduct re-elections in any of the local bodies, if required, on March 13. Votes will be counted on March 14.

The MC polls will be held in Vizianagaram, Greater Visakhapatnam, Eluru, Vijayawada, Machilipatnam, Guntur, Ongole, Chittoor, Tirupati, Kadapa, Kurnool, and Anantapur. The commission initially started the elections process for the urban local bodies on March 9, 2020 and proceeded till the stage of scrutiny of nominations on March 14, 2020.



With the issuance of the notification, Model Code of Conduct has come into force in the urban areas of Andhra Pradesh from Monday

NIMMAGADDA RAMESH KUMAR | STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER

90 lakh roses flown from B'lore airport for Valentine's Day



AGENCIES

Bangalore, Feb 15: A whopping 90 lakh roses weighing 2.73 lakh kg were flown from Bangalore to 41 overseas and domestic destinations by air to celebrate the Valentine's Day, the airport operator has said.

"Around 6.4 million (64 lakh) rose stems weighing 1.7 lakh kg were flown by domestic airlines to dozen cities across the country, including Auckland, Beirut, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, London, Manila and Singapore during the Valentine season from the Kempegowda international airport," said Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) in a statement here.

Similarly, 2.6 million (26 lakh) rose stems weighing 1.03 lakh kg were flown by domestic airlines to dozen cities across the country, including Ahmedabad, Bagdogra in West Bengal, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Mumbai.

Covid pandemic, however, impacted domestic sales and export of roses in different colours as the virus induced restrictions affected its demand this year.

"As people around the world reel under the pandemic, the sentiment to celebrate events like the Valentine's Day has been subdued this year. Demand for roses, especially Dutch variety has been less than 50 per cent of last year," said a floriculture dealer said on the occasion.

The sentiment to celebrate events like the Valentine's Day has been subdued this year. Demand for roses, especially Dutch variety has been less than 50 per cent of last year

FLORICULTURE DEALER

Lakhs of roses are grown in Karnataka's southern region, including Bangalore, Chikkaballapur, Doddaballapur, Kolar, Mandya and Ramanagara for domestic and export markets under salubrious climate for the season.

Flowers, especially roses are sold at the international flower auction in the city for domestic consumption and exports.

In Karna, surrender BPL cards if you own a TV or fridge or a two-wheeler

AGENCIES

Belagavi, Feb 15: The Karnataka government Monday asked people possessing Below Poverty Line (BPL) ration cards, despite being ineligible on account of owning either a two-wheeler, TV, fridge or over five acres of land, to surrender them before March 31 or face legal action.

"There are parameters for possessing a BPL card. They should not have more than five acres of land, motorcycle, TV or fridge."

Those who don't qualify on these parameters should return the cards or else we will do it," Food and Civil Supplies Minister Umesh

Katti said at a press conference in Belagavi. He said anyone earning more than Rs 1.20 lakh annually should not use BPL cards and has to return it before March 31.

Congress flayed the remarks and party workers staged protests in front of various ration shops in Bangalore. Party workers also protested in Dharwad, Mysuru and Tumakuru, a Congress leader said.

Congress MLA U T Khader said the issue had come up before him when he was the Food and Civil Supplies Minister in the Siddaramaiah government and he had decided not to relax the norms as many poor people would be affected.

Activist Disha is 'passionate about climate change'

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Feb 15: Disha Ravi, the 22-year-old environment activist now in police custody, is known to be very knowledgeable in her field - climate change - she was well versed with the subject, according to those who knew her well.

The Delhi Police arrested Ravi late Saturday from Bengaluru and now she had been remanded to police custody by a court in Delhi, for five days. She is part of 'Friday For Future' (FFF) worldwide climate change activism network and the co-founder of the FFF movement in the country.

An activist who used to take part in most of her campaigns told IANS on condition of anonymity that when it came to campaigning for climate change, she used to be the first one to arrive and last one to leave from the venue. "She is one of the very rare breed of dedicated activists in the city who wore her heart on her sleeve," the activist explained.



The activist categorically ruled out giving his name as he feared that police might come after him for speaking in favour of Disha. He added that most of Disha's

Doorstep ration delivery during polls to go ahead

ANDHRA HC SUSPENDS SEC ORDER RESTRICTING RATION VEHICLES

AGENCIES

Amaravati, Feb 15: In a major relief to the Andhra Pradesh government, the High Court Monday suspended the State Election Commissioner (SEC) Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar's orders restricting rice door delivery service during the ongoing elections.

The High Court said the State Election Commission cannot stop the government from using mobile delivery vehicles to supply food to the people.

Earlier, Kumar ordered that the government cannot use these mobile vehicles for a period of four weeks, in view of the ongoing rural local bodies' elections.

The SEC personally examined a delivery vehicle to see if these vehicles will allegedly exert any influence on the polls as they would fan out across the nooks and corners of the villages, carrying ration rice for beneficiaries.

Many decisions of Kumar are being challenged in the Court and there seems to be no end to the bickering between the state and the SEC.

Earlier, he issued a gag and



AP CM flags off the ration delivery vehicles

ANDHRA SEC HAD ORDERED THAT THE GOVT CAN'T USE THESE MOBILE VEHICLES FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR WEEKS, IN VIEW OF THE ONGOING RURAL POLLS

MANY DECISIONS OF KUMAR (SEC) ARE BEING CHALLENGED IN THE COURT AND THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END TO THE BICKERING BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE SEC

home confinement order on Panchayat Raj Minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy which was

also suspended by the Court. The Court is also poised to hear a case on Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Sri Venkateshwara Rao, against whom the SEC ordered a case to be registered.

The commission has already successfully completed two phases of rural local bodies elections, even as two more are due.

Monday, Kumar had also issued the election schedule for 12 municipal corporations and 75 municipalities across the state.

The southern state will be in the grip of elections all through February till mid-March.

Gaganyaan is just the beginning!

INDIA PLANS TO HAVE SUSTAINED HUMAN PRESENCE IN SPACE



AGENCIES

Bangalore, Feb 15: India plans to have a sustained human presence in space and is coming out with a policy framework and a long-term roadmap.

The Department of Space (DoS) has envisaged a national effort to meet the goal of successful demonstration of human spaceflight capability and to achieve the vision of sustained human presence in space.

India's maiden human spaceflight module 'Gaganyaan' will be launched after the second unmanned mission planned in 2022-23, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said last week.

In her Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the first unmanned launch is slated for December this year.

The DoS has now put up for public consultation on the website of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which comes under the former, the draft "Humans in Space Policy for India - 2021" and guidelines and procedures for its implementation.

DoS believes that given the collaborative nature of human spaceflight due to its multi-disciplinary nature, it is essential to have a policy-framework, which not only fosters partnerships but also addresses proliferation concerns and compliance to existing policies, laws and treaties.

"Human-spaceflight programme needs to be sustained over longer periods to deliver tangible benefits," according to the draft.

Hence, it is essential that the policy enables sustained presence in low earth orbit and beyond through

reliable, robust, safe and affordable means by undertaking appropriate capacity building measures like collaborations, infrastructure development, facilities modernisation, technology development and human resource development.

This would also encourage new industries, create high technology jobs, enable socio-economic growth and further enhance India's stature and role in space, it was noted.

"The Humans in Space Policy aims for sustained human presence in space as an instrument for development, innovation and foster collaborations in alignment with national interests", the draft said.

Technological elements such as development of human rated launch vehicle, environmental control and life support system, crew escape system, deceleration system, crew selection and training and development of human centric products shall be undertaken by the DoS, utilising expertise of ISRO, national research institutions, academia, industry and others.

A long-term road map for sustained human presence in low earth orbit (LEO) and undertaking exploration missions beyond it would be defined. "DoS/ISRO shall encourage start-ups and industries through suitable mechanism.

Mechanism shall be established to explore spinoff opportunities and their development for societal benefits, according to the draft.

DoS/ISRO shall establish a comprehensive criterion for screening and selection of crew members. For initial missions, pilots from Indian Armed forces will be inducted as crew members, it was stated.

Disha is part of 'Friday For Future' (FFF) worldwide climate change activism network and the co-founder of the FFF movement in the country

She is one of the very rare breed of dedicated activists in the city who wore her heart on her sleeve... All Whatsapp groups have become silent, in which she and her friends were active

DISHA'S COLLEAGUE

her friends were active," the activist said.

Another activist claimed that she was raised by a single parent, her mother,

Manjula, but other than this many of her friends not know much about her personal life. "As she became popular in activism circles

only around 2019 and due to metropolitan culture, many do not speak or reveal much about their personal life, unless they are close friends," he said.

Meanwhile, Mukund Gowda, a citizen activist, told IANS that he came in contact with her activism only in late 2019 when he was part of the Save Tree campaign and since then he remained in touch with her till mid-2020, when Covid hit the world. "Since corona days, activism more or less shifted to social media sites due to Covid norms. Therefore, we remained in touch with each other through Whatsapp Groups, where it was discussed only about save tree campaigns," he said.

According to him, she was more interested in teaching school-children about the impact of climate change.

"She used to come well prepared to school functions to deliver her lecture and she used simple language to convey her thoughts to young minds," he said.

of the day quote

Whoever harbours the seed of anti-nationalism has to be dealt with accordingly, be it 21-year-old climate activist Disha Ravi or anyone else



ANIL VUJ | HARYANA HOME MINISTER

Our government has taken a decision that will provide a huge impetus to 'Digital India'



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Is the state so weak that a tweet threatens its security? Is the state so paranoid that a 22 year is a national security threat? Is the state so intolerant that it cannot tolerate youth standing with farmers? Is this the 'badlav' Modiji wanted?



KAPIL SIBAL | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

CBI books nine NTPC officials

New Delhi: The CBI has registered an FIR against nine former and serving officials of the NTPC for alleged shortfall of cement and steel stock worth over ₹1 crore at its upcoming 4000 MW plant at Lara in Chattisgarh, officials said Monday. The NTPC had approached the CBI in December, 2019 with a complaint against its officials. The agency could not take any action as the Chhattisgarh government had withdrawn its general consent to allow the CBI to operate in its jurisdiction in January that year.

Two militant associates held

Srinagar: Security forces have arrested two militant associates in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir and seized incriminating material from their possession, police said Monday. Sameer Ahmed Ittoo and Ubaid Ameen Mallah, residents of Kulgam district of south Kashmir, were arrested Sunday, a police spokesperson said.

Minor quake strikes Bihar

Patna: A low-magnitude earthquake hit Parts of Bihar Monday night, though no damage was reported. According to the National Centre for Seismology, the tremors measured 3.5 on the Richter scale and were felt around 9.23 pm. The epicentre was close to the state capital, at a depth of five km, it said. The tremors were mild enough to go unnoticed by a large section of the population here.

ED arrests Sachin Joshi

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Sachin Joshi, an actor-producer hailing from a family having gutka manufacturing business, in connection with a money laundering case against the city-based Omkar Realtors and Developers, officials said Monday. They said Joshi, 37, was arrested under relevant sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Sunday after he was questioned for several hours by the investigating officer of the case.

3 charred to death

Ranchi: Ranchi: Three people including a mother, daughter and granddaughter were charred to death after the paddy straw they were sleeping on caught fire in Jharkhand's Giridih district early Monday, police said. According to police, the incident took place at Salaidih situated under Birni police station of Giridih district.



Tourism will really blossom in Sindhudurg, especially when Mopa international airport is commissioned in August 2022. Goa will reap benefits

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

SUNSHINE BRINGS CHEER

As mercury continued its upward trend in J&K and Ladakh, bright sunshine marked Monday in both union territories



40 YRS ON, BEHMAI VICTIMS STILL AWAIT JUSTICE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) Feb 15: It has been exactly 40 years since 20 villagers were lined up and shot dead by once bandit queen Phoolan Devi in Behmai village.

The incident took place February 14, 1981 and the families of the victims are still awaiting justice even though the main accused Phoolan Devi was shot dead in 2001.

Rajaram Singh, the main witness of the 1981 Behmai massacre and the plaintiff in the case, also died after prolonged illness at

Behmai in December last year at the age of 85.

Rajaram's two younger brothers, Banwari Singh and Himmat Singh, cousin Naresh Singh, nephews Dev Singh, Hukum Singh and Dashrath Singh were among those killed by the Phoolan gang.

"The killing of my husband Lal Singh and 19 others by Phoolan and her gang left us in agony for life. The failure of the system in delivering justice is hurting even more," said Munni Devi, who was just nine-year-old when she had been married.

"I had never seen my husband as the ritual of 'gauna' was not held by then. My life was completely jolted when the news of Lal Singh's death came. I had lost my parents and was being raised by my siblings. My brothers sent me to Behmai the next day to participate in rituals as a widow," she recalled.

Sumitra, widow of another victim Ram Singh was doing household chores when the gang arrived. "None of the men at home were spared. My husband and others were asked to stand in a queue. The dacoits then started firing from

all sides. People did not have time to run away. Some fell prey to bullets immediately. There were no medical facilities nearby, so many injured died later," said Sumitra.

Among the 20 killed, there were 17 Thakurs, one Muslim, one Dalit and one OBC, while six were injured. The bereaved families got ₹7,500 from the government as compensation. A local court of Kanpur had framed charges in the case in August 2012-31 years after the massacre. Out of the 23 accused, 16, including Phoolan Devi, are already dead. Charges were framed

against four surviving accused, while the court issued a non-bailable warrant against three absconders-Maan Singh, Ramkesh and Vishwanath.

The special court (dacoity) was scheduled to pronounce verdict in the case in January last year, but it was adjourned several times since the original case diary was found missing from court records and a probe was ordered. As things stand today, no one knows when the verdict will be delivered and there is no word about the missing case diary either.

Bombay HC refuses to quash FIR against SSR's sister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 15: The Bombay High Court Monday refused to quash an FIR lodged against late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sister Priyanka Singh for allegedly forging and fabricating a medical prescription for her brother.

A division bench of Justices S S Shinde and M S Karnik, however, quashed the FIR against Meetu Singh, another sister of Rajput.

The court said while there was prima facie evidence against Priyanka Singh, the case against Meetu Singh does not stand. "We are of the considered opinion that the FIR against petitioner Meetu Singh does not survive," the bench said.

"However, the FIR against petitioner Priyanka Singh is not quashed as we prima facie find that a case is made out," the court said. The bench said its judgment shall not cause an impediment for the investigating agency to probe the FIR and submit whatever report it deems fit.

The sisters had approached the HC seeking to quash the First Information Report (FIR) lodged for alleged forgery and fabrication of a medical prescription for their brother for anxiety issues.

The FIR was lodged against Priyanka Singh, Meetu Singh and doctor Tarun Kumar of Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital by the Bandra police in Mumbai on September 7 last year, based on a complaint filed by Rajput's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty. As per the complaint, Rajput's sisters and the doctor prepared a forged and fabricated prescription for anti-depressants for the actor a few days before his death. Rajput, 34, was found dead at his home in suburban Bandra on June 14 last year. His father K K Singh later lodged a case of abetment of suicide and cheating against Chakraborty and her family members. The CBI is conducting a probe into the case.

China dismantles shelters at Pangong

India and China are engaged in a nearly 10-month-long military standoff at the LAC

AGENCIES

Dehradun, Feb 15: The Chinese People's Liberation Army is finally vacating Finger 4 area on the northern bank of Pangong lake that it had occupied last year and changed the status quo on the Line of Actual Control with India. The Chinese troops are dismantling shelters and removing other structures they had built up during the occupation.

This is happening as per the disengagement agreement between India and China. The agreement states that Chinese troops will move back to Finger 8 and Indian troops will pull back to the Dhan Singh Thapa post between Finger 2 and 3 of the north bank of Pangong lake. Further, there would be a temporary moratorium on military activities, including patrolling in the traditional areas.

The mountain spurs jutting into the lake are referred to as 'Fingers' in military parlance. The north bank of the lake is divided into 8 fingers. India has claimed its territory till Finger 8 and China disputes its claims till Finger 4.

There have been regular face-



offs between the two armies between Finger 4 and Finger 8, a distance of eight kilometres, on the northern bank of the lake.

A senior government official said there has been a considerable thinning of troops from Finger 4. The official also said that the PLA is removing its boats from the lake. China has deployed a lot of men and materiel at Finger 4 and south of the lake to alter the status quo at the LAC. Before the tensions last year, boats were deployed beyond Finger 8 of the lake. Once withdrawal

happens, patrolling will be resumed only when both sides reach an agreement in diplomatic and military talks that would be held subsequently. Further, Indian and Chinese troops are also falling back from eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation positions on the south bank of the lake. On the southern bank of the lake, tanks that were separated by less than 100 metres have been pulled back by both countries' forces.

India and China are engaged in a nearly 10-month-long military standoff at the Line of Actual

Control. The confrontations began on the north bank of Pangong lake, both in the waters and the bank as Chinese incursions increased in early May last year.

The confrontation later spilled over to the southern bank following which the Indian Army occupied crucial heights irking the Chinese that led to incidents of gunshots being fired in the air.

Once complete disengagement is achieved at all friction areas, both sides will undertake de-escalation along the LAC. Hence, India should continue to create military, economic and diplomatic levers. Besides disengagement and de-escalation, India's efforts should be to get the LAC demarcated at the earliest.

The current environment is favourable to expedite the process. In addition, a strategic approach based on active defence and pre-emption along the LAC should be pursued to protect our territory. This entails identifying the vulnerable spots and keep its forces ready for pre-emptive operations as also effective proactive diplomatic steps to keep China under pressure.

CHEERFUL MOOD



Students wearing traditional dresses celebrate the Basant Panchmi festival in a mustard field, in Patiala

PTI PHOTO

Kanhaiya meets Nitish aide, triggers speculation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Feb 15: Many eyebrows were raised in Bihar Monday as news broke of a meeting between CPI's rising star Kanhaiya Kumar and Ashok Choudhary, a minister and key aide of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

A fiery former JNU student leader, Kanhaiya has been soft toward Nitish Kumar despite their parties rarely getting on the same page on most issues. Kanhaiya met Choudhary Sunday. During his failed bid for the Lok Sabha in 2019, the former student leader had avoided attacking Kumar. Kumar had come out in support of Kanhaiya when the JNU controversy erupted in 2016. The JD(U) was then not a part of the BJP-led NDA. The two retained the soft spot for each other even after Nitish Kumar returned to the NDA in 2017.

Choudhary's meeting with Kanhaiya, a staunch communist, came at a time when the charismatic young politician is said to



have been left mortified by a censure motion that the CPI recently passed against him.

Earlier, there had been tensions between the aspiring leader and his party during the Lok Sabha elections when the CPI reportedly insisted that he share a part of money he had raised through crowd-funding.

Sources close to Kanhaiya as well as Choudhary insisted that it was a "non-political" meeting and that both have known each other for long. It has, nonetheless, evoked reactions from those holding strong views on nationalism and against the so-called "tukde tukde gang". Subhash Singh, a state minister

from the BJP quota, called the former JNUSU president a "lunatic" (paagal) and said his meeting with a senior leader of an alliance partner was "not appropriate".

Ajay Alok, a JD(U) spokesman, reacted "Kanhaiya shall be welcome into our party if he chooses to give up his perverse ideology. Some in the ruling alliance said on condition of anonymity that the meeting could have been yet another attempt by the JD(U) to raise its stock after its unsatisfactory performance in the assembly elections.

A few hours after Kanhaiya's meeting with Choudhary, Chandan Kumar Singh, an LJP MP, called on Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. JD(U) spokesman Rajiv Ranjan Prasad latched on the development to berate the LJP, saying "Chirag Paswan has been alleging that his constituency of Jamui has been neglected and there has been no progress in Bihar at all. The meeting between his party MP and the chief minister is a rebuff to his brand of politics".

Govt liberalises restrictions on geospatial data for map-making

THE CHANGE IS MADE SPECIFICALLY FOR INDIAN COMPANIES THROUGH UPDATING THE CURRENT GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO DEVELOPING MAP TECHNOLOGIES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 15: Announcing a sweeping change in India's mapping policy, the Centre on Monday liberalised regulations on geospatial data, making it freely available in the country for innovation and

IT companies. The change is made specifically for Indian companies through updating the current guidelines pertaining to developing map technologies.

According to an official statement, the government realised that the existing regime imposed significant restrictions on the mapping industry, from creation to dissemination of maps, requiring Indian companies to seek licences and follow a cumbersome system of pre-approvals and permissions.

Compliance with these regulatory restrictions has subjected startups in India to red tape, hindering Indian innovation in map technologies for decades, it said. The Union Science and Technology Ministry, while announcing the new guidelines, said that it will



greatly enhance the preparedness of the country for emergency response.

"With the new guidelines, individuals, companies, organisations, and government agencies shall be free to process the acquired geospa-

tial data, build applications, and develop solutions in relation to such data and use such data products, applications, and solutions by way of selling, distributing, sharing, swapping, disseminating, publishing, ..., it said. However, self-certifica-

tion will be used to convey adherence to these guidelines, it added.

Union Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan said that the move will help drive efficiencies in agriculture and emergency-response capabilities while also facilitating rise of new-age industries.

"The availability of comprehensive, highly accurate, granular, and constantly updated representation of geospatial data will significantly benefit diverse sectors of the economy and will significantly boost innovation in the country and greatly enhance the preparedness of the country for emergency response," he added.

The ministry also stated that the policy change is aligned to the vision of "Atmanirbhar Bharat" to achieve a \$5 trillion economy.

Science and Technology Secretary, Professor Ashutosh Sharma, said that increased participation of the private sector will augment the growth of new technologies, platforms and application of geospatial data contributing to the country's progress. However, the government has put in place a few new rules to function. Sharma said that there is restriction on revealing the attributes or features of sensitive areas even though there would be none on surveying the area itself.

"The data is not for access, but only for surveying," he added. Similarly, terrestrial mapping and surveying will be allowed only by Indian entities. The data generated from such processes can be owned only by Indians. Foreign players can licence the information but not own it.



Innovation is a key to tackling carbon emissions, and governments should be encouraged to invest more than what they have done
BILL GATES | MICROSOFT CO-FOUNDER

MEXICO GETS OVER 8 LAKH AZTRAZENACA VAX DOSES FROM INDIA

Mexico received a shipment of 870,000 doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine from India Sunday, the government said, as the country prepares to prioritise older adults in the next phase of its vaccination campaign



of the day quote

All across our nation, parents, spouses, children, siblings, and friends have known the pain of losing a loved one to gun violence
JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

If major Dogecoin holders sell most of their coins, it will get my full support. Too much concentration is the only real issue imo
ELON MUSK | SPACEX CEO

The international community needs to be cognizant of the fact that any military conflict in South Asia could endanger stability in a region that is critical for global trade flows and security
SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI | PAK FOREIGN MINISTER

Support grows for Capitol riot inquiry after Trump acquittal



Bipartisan support appeared to be growing for an independent Sept 11-style commission into the deadly insurrection that took place at the Capitol

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Feb 15: A day after former President Donald Trump won his second Senate impeachment trial, bipartisan support appeared to be growing for an independent September 11-style commission into the deadly insurrection that took place at the Capitol.

Investigations into the riot were already planned, with Senate hearings scheduled later this month in the Senate Rules Committee. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has asked retired Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré to lead an immediate review of the Capitol's security process. Lawmakers from both parties, speaking on Sunday's news shows, signaled that even more inquiries were likely. The Senate verdict Saturday, with its 57-43 majority falling 10 votes short of the two-thirds needed to convict Trump, hardly put to rest the debate about the former president's culpability

for the January 6 assault. "There should be a complete investigation about what happened," said Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, one of seven Republicans who voted to convict Trump. "What was known, who knew it and when they knew, all that, because that builds the basis so this never happens again." An independent commission along the lines of the one that investigated the September 11 attacks would probably require legislation to create. That would elevate the investigation a step higher, offering a definitive government-backed accounting of events. Pelosi has expressed support for such a commission.

"There's still more evidence that the American people need and deserve to hear and a 9/11 commission is a way to make sure that we secure the Capitol going forward," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., a Biden ally. "And that we lay bare the record of just how responsible and how abjectly violating of his constitutional oath President Trump really was." House prosecutors who argued for Trump's conviction of inciting the riot said Sunday they had proved their case. They also railed against the Senate's Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, and others who they said were "trying to have it both ways" in finding the former President not guilty but criticiz-

Impeachment isn't the final word for Trump

Donald Trump's acquittal at his second impeachment trial may not be the final word on whether he's to blame for the deadly Capitol riot. The next step for the former president could be the courts. Now a private citizen, Trump is stripped of his protection from legal liability that the presidency gave him. That change in status is something that even Republicans who voted on Saturday to acquit of inciting the January 6 attack are stressing as they urge Americans to move on from impeachment. "President Trump is still liable for everything he did while he was in office, as an ordinary citizen, unless the statute of limitations has run," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said after that vote. He insisted that the courts were a more appropriate venue to hold Trump accountable than a Senate trial. "He didn't get away with anything yet," McConnell said. "Yet." Trump also faces legal exposure in Georgia over an alleged pressure campaign on state election officials, and in Manhattan over hush-money,

ing him at the same time. A close Trump ally, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., voted for acquittal but acknowledged that Trump had some culpability for the siege at the Capitol that killed five people, including a police officer, and disrupted lawmakers' certification of Biden's White House victory. Graham said he looked forward to campaigning with Trump in the 2022 election, when Republicans hope to regain the congressional majority. "His behavior after the election was over the top," Graham said. "We need a 9/11 commission to find out what happened and make sure it never happens again."

UK PM under pressure to lift COVID lockdown

AGENCIES

London, Feb 15: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is under mounting pressure to lift all COVID-19 lockdowns in two and a half months as lockdown-sceptic Tories called on him to commit to a timetable for easing the restrictions with a complete end to controls by the end of April.

In a letter to the prime minister, leaders of the Covid Recovery Group (CRG) said the "tremendous pace" of the vaccination roll-out means restrictions in England should begin easing from early March, the a local newspaper reported Sunday.

They said ministers must produce a cost-benefit analysis to justify any controls that remain in place after that date, with a "roadmap" stating when they would be removed. The letter was organised by the CRG chair and deputy chair, Mark Harper and Steve Baker, and was said to have the backing of 63 Conservative Party lawmakers in all.

Dragnet, planned law boost French fight of Islamic radicals

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Feb 15: More than three dozen police officers descended on a small private school in Paris, blocked the 92 students inside their classrooms, took photos everywhere, even inside the refrigerator, and grilled the school director in her office.

"It was like they were moving in on a drug deal," Hanane Loukili, the director and co-founder of the MHS middle and high school said, recalling the November 17 scene.

Loukili didn't know it then, but a team from the Cell to Fight Radical Islam and Community Withdrawal, or CLIR, had arrived for an inspection. The dragnet sweeps schools, shops, clubs or mosques to rout out "radicalisation." Within a week, a shaken Loukili informed students their school was shutting down.

Loukili insists she is no radical, but such operations illustrate the ex-



text of French efforts to fight extremism as lawmakers prepare to vote Tuesday on a Bill aimed at snuffing it out. The MHS School had an unusual profile. It was secular and co-educational but allowed female Muslim students to wear headscarves in class - forbidden in public schools - and to pray during breaks. Unlike private Muslim schools in France, where headscarves are allowed, MHS did not offer religion or theology courses. Loukili and others at the school claim it was a perfect target

LUNAR YEAR CELEBRATIONS



A fire dragon dance is performed during Lunar New Year celebrations in Sao Paulo, Brazil

REUTERS PHOTO

Suu Kyi detention extended as protests rage in Myanmar



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yangon, Feb 15: Myanmar's military leaders have extended their detention of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose remand was set to expire Monday and whose freedom is a key demand of the crowds of people continuing to protest this

month's military coup. Suu Kyi will now be remanded until February 17, when she will likely appear in court by video-conference, according to Khin Maung Zaw, a lawyer asked by Suu Kyi's party to represent her. The Nobel laureate remains under house arrest on a minor

charge of possessing unregistered imported walkie-talkies. Suu Kyi's extended detention is likely to further inflame tensions between the military, which seized power a February 1 coup, and the protesters who have taken to the streets of cities across the Southeast Asian nation seeking the return of the government they elected.

Protesters continued to gather across Myanmar Monday following a night in which authorities cut the country's Internet access and increased the security presence in major cities seeking to curtail demonstrations.

Thousands of engineers marched on the streets of Mandalay, the country's second-largest city, chanting and holding signs that read: "Free our leader," "Who stands with justice?" and "Stop arresting people illegally at midnight."

SHORT TAKES

81 Boko Haram militants killed

Abuja: Nigeria's army officials Monday claimed that they have recently killed 81 Boko Haram militants in clearance operations in the country's northeastern region. The operations covered "many villages" in the vast Sambisa forest in the northeastern state of Borno, said Farouk Yahaya, Theater Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole. He did not say when the operations were conducted or how long they lasted.

Peru's Foreign Minister quits

Lima: Peru's Foreign Minister resigned Sunday amid an uproar over government officials being secretly vaccinated against the coronavirus before the country recently received 1 million doses for health workers facing resurgence in the pandemic. President Francisco Sagasti confirmed that Elizabeth Astete stepped down and told the local television channel America that Peruvians should feel outraged and angry about this situation that jeopardises the enormous effort of many Peruvians working on the front line against COVID.

Israeli strike kills 6 fighters in Syria

Beirut: Israel fired several missiles early Monday targeting areas near the Syrian capital, Damascus, Syria's state news agency reported. An opposition war-monitoring group said the strikes killed six Iran-backed fighters. The SANA news agency claimed that Syrian air defenses shot down most of the missiles, which it said were fired from Syria's Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Israel has launched hundreds of strikes against Iran-linked military targets in Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

Global Covid-19 cases top 108.7mn

Washington: The total number of global coronavirus cases has topped 108.7 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 2.39 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University. In its latest update Monday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 108,788,324 and 2,399,330, respectively. The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths.

'Overjoyed' Harry, Meghan expecting second child

REUTERS

London, Feb 15: Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, are expecting their second child, a spokesperson for the couple said Sunday.

Harry, 36, and Meghan, 39, stepped back from royal duties in January 2020 and moved with their first son Archie to Southern California to live a more independent life and escape the British media. "We can confirm that Archie is going to be a big brother. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex are overjoyed to be expecting their second child," the spokesperson said.

Archie was born in May 2019. The Valentine's Day announcement was accompanied by a black and white photograph of a visibly pregnant Meghan lying on grass with one hand on



her stomach and her head resting on the smiling prince's leg. The photo was taken by long-time friend and photographer Misan Harriman.

Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip, Harry's father Prince Charles and the whole family were "delighted" and wished the couple well, a Buckingham Palace spokesman said.

Since ending their royal duties, Harry and Meghan have continued charity work and signed TV and other media deals, launching their debut podcast in December.

COVID conspiracy shows vast reach of Chinese disinformation

IT TOOK JUST THREE MONTHS FOR THE RUMOUR THAT COVID-19 WAS ENGINEERED AS A BIOWEAPON TO SPREAD FROM THE FRINGES OF THE CHINESE INTERNET AND TAKE ROOT IN MILLIONS OF PEOPLE'S MINDS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, Feb 15: It took just three months for the rumour that COVID-19 was engineered as a bioweapon to spread from the fringes of the Chinese Internet and take root in millions of people's minds.

By March 2020, belief that the virus had been human-made and possibly weaponised was widespread, multiple surveys indicated.

The Pew Research Center found, for example, that one in three Americans believed the new coronavirus had been created in a lab; one in four thought it had been engineered intentionally.

This chaos was, at least in part, manufactured.

Powerful forces, from Beijing and Washington to Moscow and Tehran, have battled to control the

narrative about where the virus came from. Leading officials and allied media in all four countries functioned as super-spreaders of disinformation, using their stature to sow doubt and amplify politically expedient conspiracies already in circulation, a nine-month Associated Press investigation of state-sponsored disinformation conducted in collaboration with the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab found.

The analysis was based on a review of millions of social media postings and articles on Twitter, Facebook, VK, Weibo, WeChat, YouTube, Telegram, and other platforms.

As the pandemic swept the world, it was China - not Russia - that took the lead in spreading foreign disinformation about COVID-19's



origins.

Beijing was reacting to weeks of fiery rhetoric from leading US Republicans, including then-

President Donald Trump, who sought to rebrand COVID-19 as "the China virus." China's Ministry of Foreign

Affairs says Beijing has worked to promote friendship and serve facts, while defending itself against hostile forces seeking to politicize the pandemic.

"All parties should firmly say no to the dissemination of disinformation," the ministry said in a statement to AP, but added, "In the face of trumpeted charges, it is justified and proper to bust lies and clarify rumors by setting out the facts."

The day after the World Health Organization designated the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic, Zhao Lijian, a spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, shot off a series of late-night tweets that launched what may be the party's first truly global digital experiment with overt disinformation. "When did patient zero begin in

US?" Zhao tweeted March 12. "How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe (sic) us an explanation!"

What happened next showcases the power of China's global messaging machine.

On Twitter alone, Zhao's aggressive spray of 11 tweets March 12 and 13 was cited over 99,000 times over the next six weeks, in at least 54 languages, according to analysis conducted by DFRLab.

The accounts that referenced him had nearly 275 million followers on Twitter - a number that almost certainly includes duplicate followers and does not distinguish fake accounts.

business

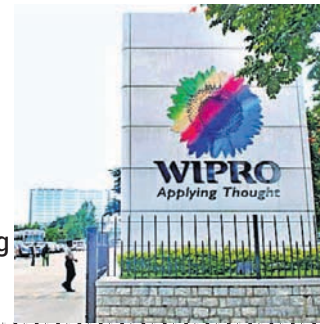


In the past year, we have witnessed the most difficult circumstances the travel industry has ever faced

PAUL GRIFFITHS
CEO, DUBAI AIRPORTS

TECH M, WIPRO INK DEALS WITH O2

Tech majors Wipro and Tech Mahindra have signed agreements with Telefónica Germany/O2 for transforming the telecommunications provider's business support systems and IT systems. Tech Mahindra will drive end-to-end IT transformation and support in delivering faster product launches, providing a more 'human-centred' experience to its customers



of the day quote

The international community needs to be cognizant of the fact that any military conflict in South Asia could endanger stability in a region that is critical for global trade flows and security

SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI
FOREIGN MINISTER, PAKISTAN

Although the first quarter of this year may see a setback, because of the state of emergency, a gradual recovery track is expected as overseas economies return to normal and the emergency likely gets ended next month

JUNICHI MAKINO
CHIEF ECONOMIST, SMBC NIKKO SECURITIES

We've made real progress, I think, in the last 2-3 days and I think we're going to see some significant commercial deals (with Google and Facebook) which could be of real benefit to the domestic media landscape and see journalists rewarded financially for generating original content

JOSH FRYDENBERG
FEDERAL TREASURER, AUSTRALIA

SHORT TAKES

ONGC to scale up gas output

New Delhi: India's top oil and gas producer ONGC on Monday said it will scale up natural gas production from a KG basin block to 2.5-3 million standard cubic meters per day by May this year and will hit the peak output sometime in 2023-24. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) last year started gas production from the \$5.07 billion KG-DWN-98/2 project in the Krishna Godavari basin, off the east coast of India.

'GDP to grow 13.5% in FY22'

Mumbai: Economic activity is on the "verge of normality" after getting severely hit by COVID-19 and Indian GDP will grow at 13.5% in FY22, a Japanese brokerage said Monday. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI) picked up to 98.1 (provisionally) for the week ending February 14, from 95.9 in the preceding week, Nomura said. The economic impact of the pandemic is set to lead the country's GDP to contract by 7.7% in FY21, and the RBI expects the GDP to jump by 10.5% in FY22.

TVS Motor ropes in Public Motors

New Delhi: TVS Motor Company Monday said it has inked a new distribution partnership with Public Motors, a part of Ghaf Investments LLC, in the UAE. As part of this association, a 2,000 sq ft marquee showroom was inaugurated along the Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai, the company said in a statement. Apart from hosting a wide range of two-wheelers, the showroom will provide spare parts and feature a service facility.

AIF investment rises to ₹1.8L cr

New Delhi: Investments by alternative investment funds (AIFs) jumped to over ₹1.8 lakh crore in Oct-Dec 2020, rising nearly 30% over the year-ago period. The investment made by AIFs stood at ₹1,84,525.49 crore in the latest quarter while in the year-ago period the figure was ₹1,42,115.104 crore, latest data available with markets regulator Sebi showed. In comparison to December 2019 quarter, the investment by AIFs in December 2020 registered a growth of 29.84%.

Exports rise 6.16% in Jan; trade deficit narrows to \$14.54bn

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 15: Growing for the second consecutive month, the country's exports rose 6.16 per cent year-on-year to USD 27.45 billion in January 2021 following healthy growth in pharma and engineering sectors, according to provisional data of the commerce ministry. Trade deficit during the month narrowed to USD 14.54 billion from USD 15.3 billion in January 2020. It was USD 15.44 billion in December 2020. Imports in January 2021 rose 2 per cent to USD 42 billion.



States' fiscal deficit to narrow to 4.3% of GDP

Mumbai: The aggregate fiscal deficit of states is likely to be at 4.3% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021-22 compared to 4.6% in 2020-21, says a report by India Ratings and Research. The rating agency has revised the outlook on state finances to stable for FY22 from stable-to-negative. "We expect the aggregate fiscal deficit of states for FY22 to come in at 4.3% of the GDP compared to 4.6% (revised) in FY21," the agency said in a report. It had earlier forecast FY21 fiscal deficit of states to be at 4.5% but revised it later due to a sharper-than-expected contraction of 6.1% y-o-y in the nominal GDP. The agency estimates the nominal GDP to grow 14.5% in FY22, and believes a gradual pick-up in revenue collections could lead to an improvement in the capital expenditure from FY22. The report said due to the economic downturn, even the union government finances are under pressure, leading to a lower-than-budgeted devolution of ₹5.50 lakh crore to states in FY21 (revised estimate: RE) as against the budget estimate (BE) of ₹8.03 lakh crore.

recorded growth were pulses, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, cotton raw and waste, vegetable oil, chemicals, and machine tools. However, cumulatively exports

during April-January 2020-21 contracted by 13.58 per cent to USD 228.25 billion as against USD 264.13 billion during the same period last year, the data showed.

WPI inflation rises to 2.03% in January

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 15: The wholesale price-based inflation rose sharply to 2.03% in January on costlier non-food manufactured items and experts are projecting further uptick in the rate of price rise in the next few months. The WPI inflation was 1.22% in December, 2020 and 3.52% in January last year.

While food articles saw softening in inflation, the sharp rise in the WPI inflation in January was led by manufactured non-food products, fuel and power, and crude petroleum and natural gas, data released by the Commerce and Industry ministry showed Monday. Food inflation in January stood at (-) 2.8%, against (-) 1.11% in the previous month. In vegetables and potatoes, it was (-) 20.82 per cent and 22.04% respectively.

Core inflation rose to a 27-month high of 5.1% in January 2021.

In non-food articles, inflation was higher at 4.16%, while in the fuel and power basket it was (-) 4.78%, during the month under review. ICRA Principal Economist Aditi Nayar said a deeper disinflation in primary food articles helped to cushion the impact of the sharp rise in core inflation. Rising demand and strengthening pricing power will make core inflation rise further to as much as 7-7.5% during April-June quarter, according to ICRA.

"... The headline WPI inflation is set to record large upticks over the course of the next few months. We now expect the WPI inflation to average 5-5.5% in FY2022, unless the available vaccines turn out to be ineffective against new Covid-19 variants, causing commodity prices, consumer confidence and business sentiment to plunge," Nayar added.



We expect the CPI inflation to have bottomed out in January 2021, with large upticks expected in the next two prints. This, combined with the anticipated hardening in the core-WPI inflation, reaffirms our view that there is no room for further rate cuts in this cycle

ADITI NAYAR | PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST, ICRA

The RBI in its monetary policy decision February 5, kept interest rates unchanged for the fourth consecutive meeting and said that the outlook for core inflation is influenced by the escalation in cost-push pressures seen in recent months.

JioFiber spreads wings across 25 places in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: JioFiber broadband service has now been provided to 25 major cities and towns across the state. The service is now available in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Puri, Berhampur, Balasore, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Jatni, Angul, Belpahar, Jagatsinghpur, Sundargarh, Bolangir, Keonjhar, Bhanuapata, Koraput, Rayagada, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Jajapur Road, Bhadrak, Talcher, Khordha and Jeyore.

In Berhampur, the JioFiber services is now available at Ankuli, Nigam Nagar, Kamapalli, Ashok Nagar, Ramahari Nagar, Arabinda Nagar and nearby localities while continuing expansion to other areas of the city.

Similarly, in Khordha town, the service is now available at Sriram Nagar, Mangal Nagar, BDA Colony and New Bus Stand area. In Jeypore town of Koraput district, JioFiber is made available at PR Peta, Bank Colony, Kumbhar Sahi, Bikram Nagar, Lal Street, KCC Bank Junction and nearby areas, in the first phase.

Likewise, commencing its expansion drive in Balasore, JioFiber services is now available near Central School Chowk, Bhoi Sahi and nearby areas and expected to roll out fast in other areas of the city over the next few weeks.

Renault launches Kiger at ₹5.45L in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15: Renault India Monday launched the all-new Kiger in city starting at an introductory price of ₹5.45 lakh (ex-showroom, Bhubaneswar). Dy General Manager (B&O), SBI, Bhubaneswar Zone-1 Anand Bikram, SBI AGM Srikanth Dash and MD of Supersales Automobiles Vishal Dhawan were present at the launching ceremony.



Renault Kiger is surely set to radically alter the dynamics in the B-SUV segment. Renault Kiger is designed with collaboration of France and India teams. It is developed and produced in India, for Indian customers first, before it is taken globally.

Renault Kiger has established itself as a Stunning, Smart and Sporty B-SUV. KIGER is equipped with smart cabin combines technology, functionality and roominess. Customers can choose from four available trims - RXE, RXL, RXT and RXZ. The top variant with all the bells and whistles is priced at ₹9.55 lakh (ex-showroom, Bhubaneswar).

The new model is powered by a new turbocharged 1.0L petrol engine for more performance and driving pleasure. This high performance, modern and efficient engine will ensure a sporty drive. The Kiger will be offered in two engine options 1.0L Energy and 1.0L Turbo with 2 pedal offerings on each of the engines.

BIZ BUZZ

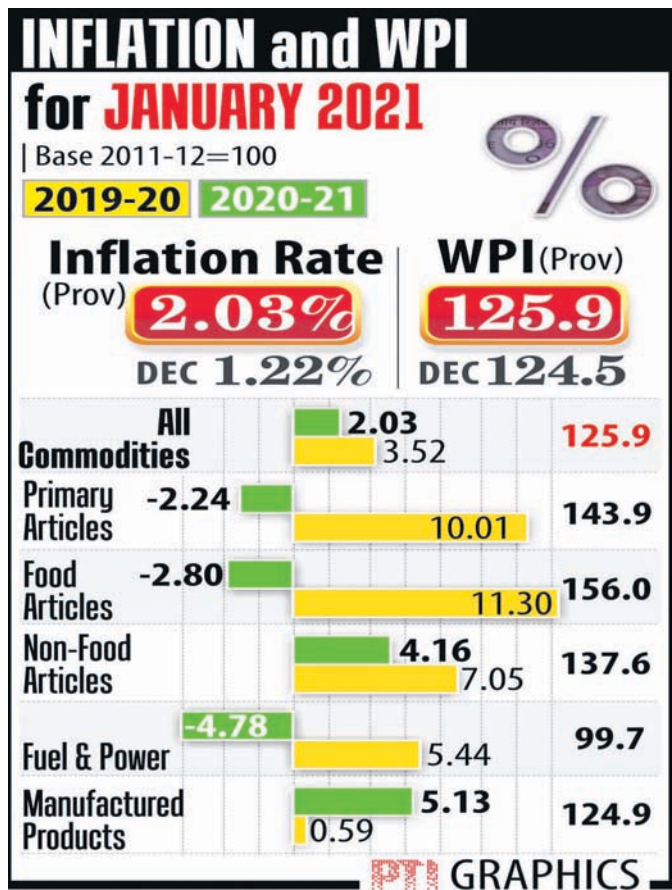
Tesla to set up manufacturing unit in K'taka

New York: Billionaire Elon Musk's Tesla Inc will set up an electric-car manufacturing unit in Karnataka, according to a government document seen by Reuters Saturday. "The US firm Tesla will be opening an electric car manufacturing unit in Karnataka," the state government said in a brief statement. The statement was part of a broader document outlining the highlights of budget to its people in Kannada. Last month, the electric carmaker incorporated Tesla Motors India and Energy Private Limited with its registered office in Bengaluru, a hub for global technology companies. Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa had then said in a tweet, which was subsequently deleted, that Tesla would start its operations in India with an R&D unit in Bangalore. It was not immediately clear if the Saturday statement was referring to the same unit.



Indian Bank holds loan recovery campaign

Bhubaneswar: Indian Bank Regional Office, Bhubaneswar organised loan recovery campaign from February 8-12 in the presence of General Manager Banambar Sahoo, Field General Manager B Suribabu, Zonal Head Sandeep Kumar Ghosal, Deputy Zonal Manager Laxmidhar Nayak participated in this campaign along with other staff. During the programme, loanees were encouraged to pay debt once and to maintain the account properly. In the last day, a loan recovery fair was organised in all the branches under this circle's jurisdiction. A sum of ₹1.2 crore was recovered. Also, a two-day advisory meeting was held among branch managers, recovery agents and advocates of bank, successfully.



'AMAZON HAD ASKED FOR \$40MN AS COMPENSATION'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 15: Amazon had asked for USD 40 million (around ₹290.41 crore) in compensation from Future Group for the deal with Reliance Industries, and Amazon's claim of not being informed of the deal is incorrect, documents submitted to the emergency arbitrator of SIAC by the Kishore Biyani-led firm said.

According to the submission by Future Group in October last year, Amazon was well aware of Future's ₹24,713 crore deal with RIL.

"In August 2020, two phone calls among the 3rd respondent (Kishore Biyani) and 8th respondent (Rakesh Biyani) and Abhijit Mujumdar on behalf of the claimant (Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings LLC), the claimant asked for USD 40 million as compensation in exchange for the Future Group and Reliance proceedings with the disputed transaction," the document said.



It further stated that "the claimant's contention in the NOA and the application that it did not have any information in connection with the disputed transaction is incorrect".

The document - dated October 12, 2020 - also noted Future Retail had made a public announcement on August 29, 2020, about the deal "after having informed the claimant's representatives that discussions were ongoing with Reliance".

"So, leaving aside the messages, calls and e-mails referred... the claimant was aware of the disputed transaction for more than a month before it initiated the present arbitration proceedings," Future said in its submission, a copy of which was seen by PTI. Amazon did not respond to e-mailed queries seeking comments on the matter. On August 29, 2020, Future Group had announced that its retail and wholesale business would be sold to Reliance Retail, owned by oil-to-chemical conglomerate RIL in a ₹24,713 crore deal.

Jaguar Land Rover to become net zero carbon biz by 2039

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 15: Tata Motors-owned Jaguar Land Rover Monday announced plans to become a net zero carbon business by 2039 for which its Jaguar brand will become an all-electric luxury vehicle marque from 2025.

Announcing the new global strategy 'Reimagine', Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) CEO Thierry Bolloré said all Jaguar and Land Rover nameplates will be available in pure electric form by end of the decade, and the first all-electric Land Rover SUV model will be launched in 2024 and the brand will have six pure electric variants in the next five years.

With the company pushing for electrification of its vehicles, the company will also undergo reorganisation of its manufacturing units as a result of which its plant

at Castle Bromwich would be re-purposed in future although it will continue to produce the existing vehicles till the end of respective life-cycles.

"As a proud member of the Tata ecosystem, with its industrial strength and worldwide standing, we are something truly unique at Jaguar Land Rover. Truly unique in the automotive industry. And now is the time to realise its potential," Bolloré said while addressing a virtual conference.

Jaguar Land Rover's aim is to achieve net zero carbon emissions across its supply chain, products and operations by 2039, he added.

Commenting on JLR's plans, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran said, "The Reimagine strategy takes Jaguar Land Rover on a significant path of acceleration in harmony with the vision and sustainability



priorities of the wider Tata Group." Chandrasekaran, who is also the chairman of Tata Motors and Jaguar Land Rover Automotive plc, further said, "Together, we will help Jaguar realise its potential, reinforce Land Rover's timeless appeal and col-

lectively become a symbol of a truly responsible business for its customers, society and the planet."

As part of this ambition, the company is also preparing for the expected adoption of clean fuel-cell power in line with the maturing of

From 2025 Jaguar will become an all-electric luxury brand to 'realise its unique potential', the company said

the hydrogen economy. Development is already underway with prototypes arriving on UK roads within the next 12 months as part of the long-term investment programme.

Bolloré said at the heart of JLR's 'Reimagine' plan will be the electrification of both Land Rover and Jaguar brands on separate architectures with two clear, unique personalities.

Under the plan, Land Rover will use the forthcoming flex Modular Longitudinal Architecture (MLA).

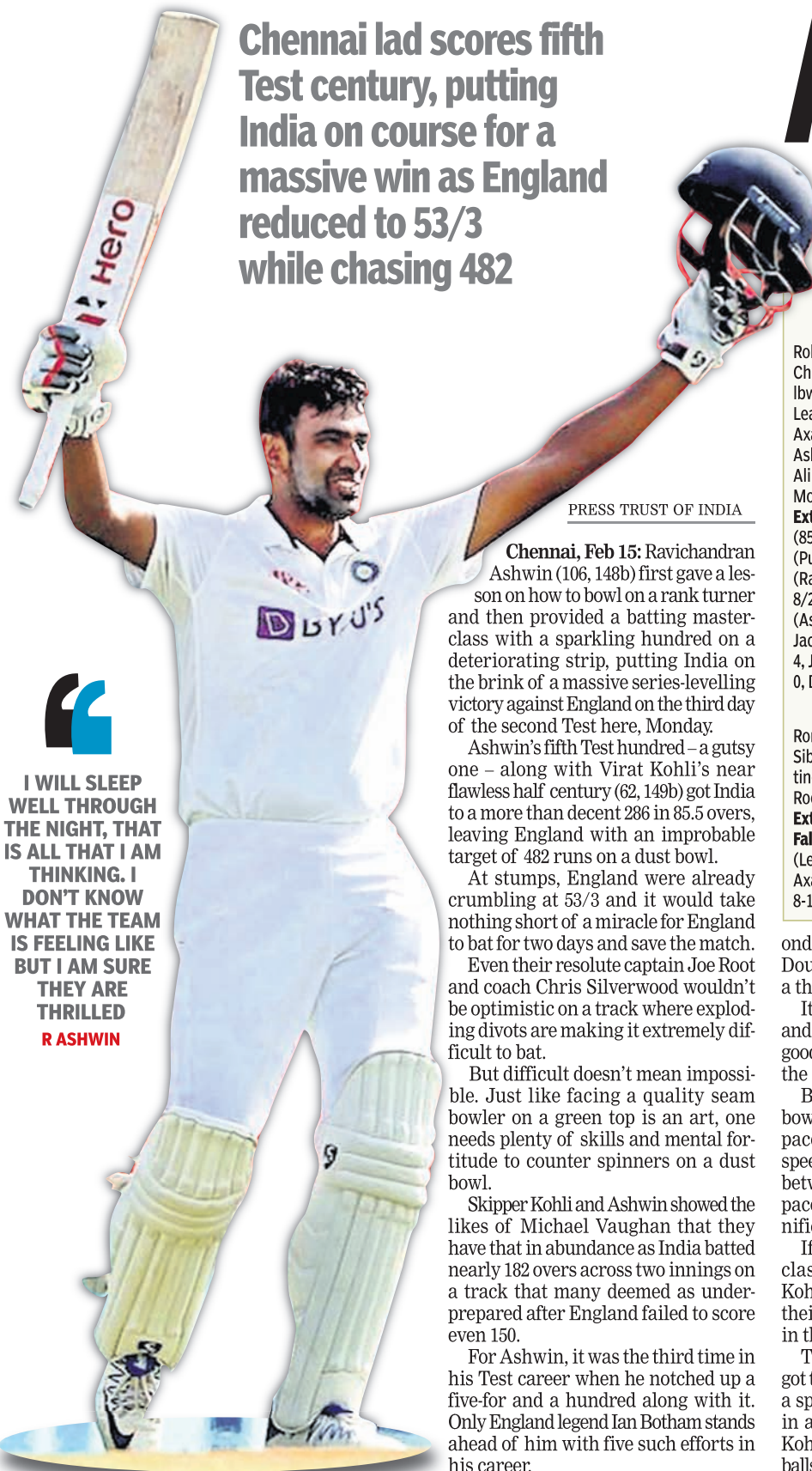
It will deliver electrified internal combustion engines (ICE) and full electric variants in the future.

In addition, Land Rover will also use pure electric biased Electric Modular Architecture (EMA) which will also support advanced electrified ICE. On the other hand, future Jaguar models will be built exclusively on a pure electric architecture, the company said.

In the next five years, Land Rover will have six pure electric variants of its luxury SUVs of three families of Range Rover, Discovery and Defender. The first all-electric variant will arrive in 2024, the company said. From 2025 Jaguar will become an all-electric luxury brand to 'realise its unique potential', the company said, adding the planned Jaguar XJ replacement will not form part of the line-up although the nameplate may be retained".

Chennai lad scores fifth Test century, putting India on course for a massive win as England reduced to 53/3 while chasing 482

ASHWIN'S VIRAT SHOW



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 15: Ravichandran Ashwin (106, 148b) first gave a lesson on how to bowl on a rank turner and then provided a batting masterclass with a sparkling hundred on a deteriorating strip, putting India on the brink of a massive series-levelling victory against England on the third day of the second Test here, Monday.

Ashwin's fifth Test hundred – a gutsy one – along with Virat Kohli's near flawless half century (62, 149b) got India to a more than decent 286 in 85.5 overs, leaving England with an improbable target of 482 runs on a dust bowl.

At stumps, England were already crumbling at 53/3 and it would take nothing short of a miracle for England to bat for two days and save the match. Even their resolute captain Joe Root and coach Chris Silverwood wouldn't be optimistic on a track where exploding divots are making it extremely difficult to bat.

But difficult doesn't mean impossible. Just like facing a quality seam bowler on a green top is an art, one needs plenty of skills and mental fortitude to counter spinners on a dust bowl.

Skipper Kohli and Ashwin showed the likes of Michael Vaughan that they have that in abundance as India batted nearly 182 overs across two innings on a track that many deemed as under-prepared after England failed to score even 150.

For Ashwin, it was the third time in his Test career when he notched up a five-for and a hundred along with it. Only England legend Ian Botham stands ahead of him with five such efforts in his career.

India's batting exhibition in the second

SCOREBOARD

India 1st innings 329
England 1st innings 134

India 2nd innings (overnight 54/1)

Rohit Sharma st Foakes b Leach 26, Cheteshwar Pujara run out 7, Virat Kohli lbw b Ali 62, Rishabh Pant st Foakes b Leach 8, Ajinkya Rahane c Pope b Ali 10, Axar Patel lbw b Ali 7, Ravichandran Ashwin b Stone 106, Kuldeep Yadav lbw b Ali 3, Ishant Sharma c Stone b Leach 7, Mohammed Siraj not out 16; Extras: 20 (b-5, lb-15); Total: 286 all out (85.5 overs). Fall: 1/42 (Gill), 2/55 (Pujara), 3/55 (Rohit), 4/65 (Pant), 5/86 (Rahane), 6/106 (Patel), 7/202 (Kohli), 8/210 (Kuldeep), 9/237 (Ishant), 10/286 (Ashwin). Bowling: Olly Stone 6.5-1-21-1, Jack Leach 33-6-100-4, Moeen Ali 32-7-98-4, Joe Root 4-0-15-0, Stuart Broad 9-3-25-0, Daniel Lawrence 1-0-7-0.

England 2nd innings

Rory Burns c Kohli b Ashwin 25, Dom Sibley lbw b Patel 3, Daniel Lawrence batting 19, Jack Leach c Rohit b Patel 0, Joe Root batting 2; Extras: 4 (b-4); Total: 53/3 (19 overs). Fall: 1/17 (Sibley), 2/49 (Burns), 3/50 (Leach). Bowling: Ishant Sharma 2-1-6-0, Axar Patel 9-3-15-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 8-1-28-1.



Virat Kohli drives through cover region as Ben Foakes looks on at Chepauk

I WILL SLEEP WELL THROUGH THE NIGHT, THAT IS ALL THAT I AM THINKING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE TEAM IS FEELING LIKE BUT I AM SURE THEY ARE THRILLED

R ASHWIN

innings was a statement for all the Doubting Thomases on how to bat on a third-day track.

It only helped that Moeen Ali (4/98) and Jack Leach (4/100) were not half as good as Ashwin and Axar Patel were on the second day.

Both the Moeen and the Leach were bowling their deliveries at an identical pace unlike Ashwin who varied the speed. Also another marked difference between Ashwin's deliveries was his pace through the air which was significantly more than Moeen's.

If Rohit Sharma set it up with a classy Day 1 hundred, Ashwin and Kohli, in the next two days, didn't take their feet off the pedal to put England in the tightest of corners.

Till the ball remained hard, England got three quick wickets leaving India in a spot at 65/4 but Kohli again seemed in a mood to make batting look easy. Kohli and Ashwin added 96 runs in 177 balls, a partnership that deflated England completely.



AXAR PATEL

Ashwin relied on shots square of the wicket and left Kohli with the job of grafting, taking it upon himself to at-

tack the England bowling.

Ravindra Jadeja's ascendancy as India's all-conditions specialist spin bowling all-rounder led to Ashwin losing a bit of confidence and the cutting edge he possessed with the willow.

But everything changed after the semi-fit Chennai engineer pulled off a last day wonder in Sydney which has now helped him get his mojo back.

In the past one year, he has tremendously upgraded his variations and the confidence in 'Ashwin the bowler' has brought to the fore 'Ashwin the batsman'.

The way he marshalled the tail was commendable with two partnerships – 27 with Ishant Sharma (7) and 49 with Mohammed Siraj (16 n o) for the 10th wicket.

In both cases, he cleverly shielded the strike and finally reached 97 with a six. A miscued shot got him his hundred and the ensuing celebrations, especially from Kohli punching his fists while giving a standing ovation, said it all. Ashwin seemed finally back where he belonged and that's right at the top.

3 Instances where R Ashwin scored a century and taking a five-wicket haul in a Test. The first two instances came against West Indies (Mumbai in 2011 & North Sound in 2016). He surpassed Garry Sobers (WI), Mushtaq Mohammad (Pak), Jacques Kallis (SA), and Shakib Al Hasan (B'desh), who have achieved the feat twice in their career. England great Ian Botham leads the chart with five times.

33 Total instances of an all-rounder achieving this double (fifer & a century) in a Test. England lead the way with six such contributions, while India and West Indies are next with five instances each. South Africa, Australia and Pakistan follow with four such occurrences for each team. Bangladesh feature three times, while New Zealand and Zimbabwe feature once each.

3 Instances of players scoring a century and taking 10 wickets in a Test match: only Botham, Imran Khan (Pak) and Shakib have achieved this feat. Ashwin will join the trio if he takes four more wickets in England's second innings.

3 Test centuries for Ashwin when batting at No.8. Only Daniel Vettori (NZ) has scored more hundreds when batting at No.8 or lower – 4 at No.8 & 1 at No.9.

39.16 Ashwin's batting average in Tests against England. The only team against whom he has a better average is West Indies (50.18 from 11 Tests). These are the only teams against whom his batting average exceeds 25.

We understand it all as a playing group, maybe it's an educational thing for someone outside the group but if you're in the sub-continent, wickets spin. The ball gets softer quicker, it doesn't seam as much, so there has to be something in the wicket. Has it accelerated a bit quickly? Probably so, but that is playing in the sub-continent, like when teams come to England or other places where it seams around

JEEVAN PATEL / ENGLAND SPIN CONSULTANT

POST DAY 3 PLAY REACTIONS

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN

CREDIT TO RATHORE: I can't say it's been happening in the last three days, I have been practising with Vikram Rathore (batting coach). I would love to credit him with how my batting has come through over the last four-five matches.

SHINE IN FRONT OF HOME CROWD: I don't know when the next Test is going to be here, but I am pleased. Don't know if I will play another Test in Chennai, and if at all, when.

THRILLED FOR SIRAJ: In the past when, he's (Ishant) been with me when I got hundreds at home and once Siraj came, I knew how to approach. I was thrilled for his batting and told him to go through the line of the ball. It was amazing to see how excited he was when I got my hundred.

COUNTERING ENGLISH SPINNERS: Even after the last Test, we spoke about how we are going to counter Leach and probably bring sweep to the game. Last time I was sweeping, I was 19 years old, I hit a bit of sweep shots well today. I am thankful the plan has paid off. Sort of had a very good day.

AXAR PATEL

SLAMMING CRITICS: If you are talking about pitch, I don't think any ball hit the helmet. There is normal spin on offer. We are playing on same track and scoring runs, so I don't think anyone should have any problems and feel that wicket is like this or that and so on and so forth. Also when we go overseas, we never complained while playing on seaming track and complained that there is more grass on the wicket. I think people need to change their mindset rather than thinking about the wicket.

MISSING OUT ON FIRST TEST: Actually, I didn't want to play my first match with a niggle and if I broke down in the middle of the game, that would have put my team in trouble. It wouldn't have been a good thing and I didn't want that to happen. So it was a conscious decision taken after consulting the physio. I was frustrated but positive side is I could give my 100 percent in second match.

England players celebrate after one of Jack Leach's wicket



MOEEN ALI

Man Utd held by West Brom

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Feb 15: Manchester United's Premier League title hopes took another blow in a 1-1 draw at West Bromwich Albion Sunday.

Having been top of the standings only 19 days ago, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's second-place side is now seven points behind Manchester City, having played a game more.

Mbye Diagne put West Brom in front after just 80 seconds before United drew level through a stunning strike from Bruno Fernandes. United captain Harry Maguire saw a late header superbly turned out a post by goalkeeper Sam Johnstone.

United striker Anthony Martial was subjected to further racist abuse on social media after the team's setback. Instagram users left racist comments and symbols in the comments section of Martial's most re-

cent post from four months ago.

Troy Townsend, head of development at anti-racism organization Kick It Out, said the latest abuse showed Instagram must do more to eradicate racism.

Arsenal captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang rediscovered his scoring prowess with his first Premier League hat-trick in a 4-2 win over Leeds. Operating as the main striker, Aubameyang opened the scoring with a low finish before doubling the lead with a penalty and completing his hat-trick with an early second-half header.

Hector Bellerin's first goal in more than a year had Arsenal three goals in front at the end of the first half, only for Leeds to rally with goals from Pascal Struijk and Helder Costa to make it an uncomfortable end to the game for the hosts.

Wolverhampton condemned Southampton to a sixth straight

league loss by coming from behind to win 2-1. Ruben Neves converted a contested penalty that transformed the game after Ryan Bertrand was punished for handling. Nelson Semedo's strike struck Bertrand's hand as his back was turned attempting a block at point-blank range, but still the penalty was awarded.

Neves' fourth league goal of the season cancelled out Danny Ings' stunning first-half volley and set Wolves on their way to a first win in three matches in all competitions.

Depleted Real keep pace with Atletico

MADRID: Real Madrid are celebrating another win – and lamenting yet another injury. Real continued their recent good form with a 2-0 win over Valencia in La Liga Sunday, but coach Zinedine Zidane saw his already depleted squad lose another player due to injury. Dani Carvajal got hurt before halftime in what had been his return to action after being sidelined since the beginning of the year.

Carvajal was among a group of almost 10 players not available for Zidane in recent matches. Karim Benzema and Toni Kroos scored against Valencia. Real's win left Real five points behind Atletico, who have two games in hand. Real are three points in front of third-place Barcelona, who have played one less game than Real.

Silva, Chhetri hit braces to guide BFC past MCFC

AGENCIES

Bambolim, Feb 15: Cleiton Silva and Sunil Chhetri scored a brace each to help Bengaluru FC (BFC) overcome Mumbai City FC (MCFC) challenge in a six-goal thriller, winning ISL encounter 4-2 at the GMC Stadium here, Monday.

It was game of landmark for BFC skipper Chhetri, who was playing his 200th game for the club. And scoring a brace was icing on cake for the Indian captain. The game turned out to be a special one for Silva as well, as he struck the quickest goal of this season and second quickest in ISL history, when he found the target inside 25 seconds.

Silva opened the scoring for BFC, before doubling their advantage in the 22nd minute. Leading into the second half, BFC were 2-0 up, when the second half saw four goals shared.

Adam Le Fondre reduced the deficit for MCFC scoring in the 50th. However, Chhetri restored the two-goal advantage seven minutes later. In the 72nd, Le Fondre made the scores 2-3 for MCFC and raised some hope of a comeback. However, Chhetri made sure there is no comeback, scoring in the stoppage time.

Rafa in Australian Open last 8

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Feb 15: Rafa Nadal has advanced to the Australian Open quarterfinals for the 13th time. The World No.2 Nadal closed his 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win over 16th-seeded Fabio Fognini with an ace.

He was wary of Fognini and lifted his game in the second and third sets to avoid any repeat of the 2015 US Open. That's when Fognini became one of only two players who've rallied from two sets down to beat Nadal in five.

There was no chance this time. Nadal responded to dropping a service game in the second set by

breaking straight back.

He will next face fifth-seeded Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas, who received a walkover after No.9 seed Matteo Berrettini of Italy withdrew due to an abdominal strain. It will be Nadal's 43rd Grand Slam quarterfinal. He shares the record for most men's major titles with Roger Federer. They each have 20.

Nadal's preparation for the year's first major was hampered by back stiffness. After the win over Fognini he said: "I'm happy the back is holding better."

Earlier in the day, fourth seed Daniil Medvedev also booked his place in the quarterfinals after a

commanding straight-sets win over Mackenzie McDonald.

Medvedev beat the 25-year-old American 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 in a match that lasted an hour and 29 minutes at the Margaret Court Arena. He will face Andrey Rublev in what can be a blockbuster clash, Wednesday.

After Jessica Pegula earned her first trip to a Grand Slam quarterfinal, the daughter of the owners of Buffalo's NFL and NHL franchises scribbled on the screen of an Australian Open court-side TV camera: "Hi mom, hi dad, see you next rd Jen B."

In addition to a shoutout to her parents, that was a message for Jennifer Brady, a good pal of Pegula's whose fourth-round match was up next in Rod Laver Arena. And after Brady won, too, setting up an all-American matchup against Pegula with a berth in the final four at stake, she used a blue marker to respond in kind, writing: "Bring it Jess!"

The 61st-ranked Pegula beat No.5 seed Elina Svitolina 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, before the 22nd-seeded Brady, a Pennsylvanian who played college tennis at UCLA, had a 6-1, 7-5 victory over No.28 Donna Vekic of Croatia.

In other matches, World No.1 Ash Barty defeated Shelby Rogers 6-3, 6-4 to move into the quarterfinals, where she will square off with Karolina Muchova, a 7-6(7-5), 7-5 winner over Elise Mertens.



RAFA NADAL



Bruno Fernandes volleys Manchester United's equaliser against West Brom