BHUBANESWAR | SATURDAY, MARCH 13 | 2021

OLUME 10, ISSUE 340 | www.orissapost.com

happiness

President Joe Biden tells countrymen that America is on path to defeat Covid-19 and revive the economy INTERNATIONAL P1



Lizelle Lee ton helps South Africa beat India eves in a match where Mithali Raj

reaches 10,000 int'l runs

SPORTS

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RREGULAR by MANJUL

Let's protect rights of children. Suggest me which web series we should ban

BACK TO RING

WEST BENGAL: West Bengal

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was discharged from state-run SSKM Hospital in Kolkata Friday evening after doctors found her recovery to be

'satisfactory'. Doctors took the

decision after the 66-year-old TMC supremo repeatedly requested them to discharge her

from the medical establishment. Baneriee, seated on a wheel-

chair with her left foot plastered,

greeted several party activists gathered outside the Woodburn

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34.0°(

VARIATION

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₹1430

₹0.41

Block of the hospital.

MARKET WATCH

DOLLAR **73.30**

SILVER **₹66,115**

EURO

GOLD

WEATHER

■MAX 35.0°(

INDEX

BJP MLA's suicide attempt, Oppn's protest rock House

POST NEWS NETWORK

In Instagram post, Katrina Kaif doles out

LEISURE

words of wisdom on how to attain

Bhubaneswar, March 12: In a shocking incident, BJP legislator from Deogarh, Subash Panigrahi Friday attempted suicide in the Assembly by trying to consume sanitizer amid noisy protests over alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement in the state.

He made this attempt as a mark of protest when Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain was making a statement in the House over the paddy procurement issue. However, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha and other legislators managed to prevent Panigrahi from consuming sanitizer and recovered the toxic material from him.

"I tried to consume sanitizer as the state government left me with no option. Even though the farmers' issue was raised in the House time and again, the state government did not pay heed to the plight of the farmers," Panigrahi told reporters outside the House. During the first phase of the Budget session, Panigrahi had staged a protest in the House and threatened to immolate



himself if paddy was not procured from the farmers at the earliest. Senior BJD member Anant Das denounced Panigrahi's action. "This act of a lawmaker is not acceptable," Das said.

Since its beginning in the morning, the opening day of the second phase Budget session witnessed noisy protests by the Opposition BJP and Congress members over alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement across the state. Members of both the opposition parties rushed to the well of the House as soon as it assembled for the question hour at 10.30 over the issue. Unable to

run the proceedings, Speaker SN Patro adjourned the proceedings first till 11.30 am and later till 4 pm.

Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra said, "The government has betrayed the farmers and cheated the Opposition by not lifting the paddy from mandis despite its assurance to the House during the first phase of the Budget session.

The minister in his reply, however, defended the state government and claimed that the state government has procured 19 per cent more paddy from farmers this time than the previous year.



government left me with no option. Even though the farmers' issue was raised in the House time and again, the state government did not pay heed to the plight of the farmers

SUBASH PANIGRAHI | DEOGARH MLA

"Steps were taken to procure paddy from all registered farmers," Swain said, adding inquiries are going on over the allegation of irregularities in paddy procurement process in different districts. 'I assure the members of this House that they should give me a list of farmers who were denied permission to sell their paddy. I will ensure that all eligible farmers get opportunity to sell their paddy in mandis," he said.

The Odisha unit of the BJP has already launched an agitation in the western districts protesting the introduction of token system in the paddy procurement procedure.



Inflation rises on higher fuel prices

New Delhi, March 12: India's retail inflation accelerated to a three-month high in February on higher fuel prices, which could challenge the central bank's accommodative stance and record-low key policy rates adopted to boost the pandemic-hit economy. Annual retail inflation rose 5.03 per cent in February, up from 4.06 per cent in January, data released by the Ministry of Statistics showed Friday.

Retail petrol prices in the national capital New Delhi have gone up by nearly 9 per cent so far this year, while diesel prices are up over 10 per cent, pushed up by higher Union and state taxes, put-



Minister Narendra Modi to cut taxes. The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent last month, is expected to keep rates unchanged at its next meeting from April 5-7.

After cutting the reporate by 115 basis points to sustain the economy during the coronavirus crisis, the central bank has kept the policy rate unchanged since May, 2020. **IIP CONTRACTS P11**

UAD ROOTS FOR FREE INDO-PACIFIC

In apparent reference to China's muscle flexing in the region, US, India, Japan & Australia underscore need for a 'free & open' Indo-Pacific

Washington/New Delhi, March 12: US President Joe Biden met leaders of India, Australia, and Japan Friday, a group central to his efforts to counter China's growing military and economic power, and said a free and open Indo-Pacific region was essential to all of their futures.

The White House says the virtual meeting of the countries known as the Quad, the first at leader level, shows the importance Biden places on the Indo-Pacific region and that it will focus on ways to fight the coronavirus pandemic, as well as cooperate on economic growth and the climate crisis.

"A free and open Indo Pacific is essential to each of our futures," Biden told the meeting from the White House. "The United States is committed to working with you, our partners, and all our allies in the region, to achieve stability.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Quad has come of age and its agenda covering areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies makes it a force for global good. In his opening remarks, he also talked about shared values and promoting a secure, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

"We are united by our democratic values, and our commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Our agenda today covering areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies makes the Quad a force for global good," he said.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said he wanted the four "to forge strongly



ahead toward the realisation of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and to make visible contribution to peace, stability and prosperity of the region, including overcoming the

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison called the meeting "incredibly important." 'When governments come together at the highest level, this shows a whole new level of cooperation to create a new anchor for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific," he told reporters.

The genesis of the Quad lies in 2004 when the four countries formed a "core group" for a joint response to the Indian Ocean tsunami to undertake rescue and relief operations.

In many senses, that pioneering effort still determines the core identity of Quad, and the instinct for collective welfare and security for the people of the Indo-Pacific. The Biden administration recognised the significance of the Indo-Pacific region in its Interim National Security Strategic Guidance doc-

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Sahitya Akademi Award for Hota & Nayak from Odisha

New Delhi, March 12: Chandrasekhar Hota and Ramachandra Nayak from Odisha won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020, the Akademi announced Friday. Hota won the Sahitva

Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2020 for 'Chetanara Anwesana' in essays genre while Nayak was selected for the Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2020 for 'Bana Deula Re Suna Neula'

According to the Akademi,



Chandrasekhar Hota

the books were selected on the basis of recommendations made by the jury comprising three members each in the concerned language in accordance with the rules and



procedures laid down for the

purpose. Nayak and Hota will receive the awards in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper plaque and a cheque of ₹50,000 at a special function to be held at a later date.

The Akademi also announced the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 in 20 languages Friday during the opening day of its annual

'Festival of Letters' event. Arundhathi Poet Subramaniam won the award for her poetry collection "When God is a Traveller" in English, while politician-writer M Veerappa Moily was named for his epic poetry titled "Sri Bahubali Ahimsa Digvijayam' in Kannada.

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BENEDICT ON ABSENCE FROM WANDAVISION SEASON ONE

British actor Benedict Cumberbatch, who plays Dr Strange in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, has explained he did not appear in the first season of WandaVision because he was busy with his production company.

CHILD RIGHTS BODY ASKS NETFLIX TO

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has asked Netflix Inc to immediately stop streaming its new drama series Bombay Begums after it reviewed complaints around scenes showing children consuming drugs. In a letter to



FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

Today, you will meet with success, and you do it on your own merit without any divine intervention. You may be a student of science or arts, but you will excel due to your deep knowledge of the subject

TAURUS

You are hard working by nature but get highly frustrated when things do not end the way you had imagined, feels Ganesha. This may lead to anger against the system or the order in which things work.

GEMINI

There is every possibility that you will keep your partner in the loop while making important deci-Ganesha. And this will prevent a grave misunderstanding. Later in the day, you will benefit from the insights of your soul mate.

CANCER The first half of the day

may leave you a little get discouraged when thing are not going you way, predicts Ganesha But your subconscious mind knows how to handle such situations. You will take a break from the rat race, and take a detour to your home

LEO

Ganesha foresees today as a day full of duplicities, as you foster amazing feelings and astonishing fears. It's like you don't know whether to be happy or scared. At work, you may do well to anticipate a sudden turn of events as hectic business activities take their toll on you

VIRGO

You might spend most table today, planning and mapping your future. Keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions. Take the approval of your family as and when creeps up in the days to come.

Today, you touch a new high when it comes to pledges and promises you make may tend to perplex people at your workplace. Afternoon may see you taking on other people's responsibilities as well

SCORPIO It seems like a fruitful day in business, and to deal in

money matters, foresees Ganesha. On the career front, you may be occupied with important meetings. Things will work out for you if you manage to strike a balance between your ideas and implementation. Heavy expenditure may be on the cards as you feel tempted to buy jewellery for your beloved, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Time is something that once spent can never b earned back, says Ganesha. The impo tance of time will dawn upon you today as you undertake the massive challenge of organising your. Since the time is not favourable maintain a low profile and avoid any quarrel, which may harm you immensely

CAPRICORN

The day bodes well especially for public servants. An impending business transaction with the government will keep you busy, and suggestions from friends and peers may prove beneficial, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS That is only a reflection and not the moon in your

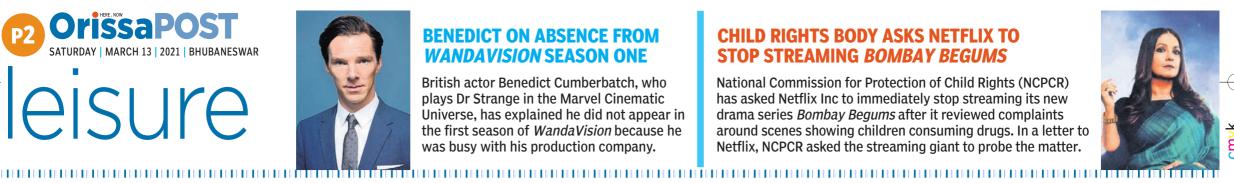
soup bowl! Be reasonable in your expectations, advises Ganesha, and give happiness a chance. You may learn an important lesson from your beloved, while you associates will be friendly

PISCES It is a day where you find yourself upbeat and optimistic about your future. savs Ganesha, Your hope fulness spurs you on to splurge and indulge vour spouse in the evening. Good times!



STOP STREAMING BOMBAY BEGUMS

Netflix, NCPCR asked the streaming giant to probe the matter.



Katrina shares tips of happiness

Mumbai: Want to know how to be happy? Check out actress Katrina Kaif's Instagram account! The actress posted a stunning picture of herself and doled out words of wisdom on how to attain happiness.

In the picture, the actress looks beautiful in a white sweater. She has teamed this up with blue jeans, minimal make-up and open hair.

"If u want to be happy, . be . Leo Tolstoy," she captions the post.

Meanwhile. Katrina was recently spotted shooting alongside actor Salman Khan in Mumbai. This led to fans speculating whether the two were filming for Tiger 3

Besides this, Katrina has two film releases lined up for the year. She will be seen in Soorvavanshi and Phone Bhoot. She shares the screen with Akshay Kumar in Sooryavanshi The film has been directed by Rohit Shetty.

Phone Booth has been directed by Gurmmeet Singh and also stars Ishaan Khatter and Siddhant Chaturvedi



Mumbai: Actress Yami Gautam has begun shooting for her film A Thursday. The film is directed and written by Behzad Khambata, and also features Dimple Kapadia, Atul Kulkarni, Neha Dhupia and Maya Sarao. An official announcement was made

for A Thursday

through the Twitter account of RSVP, the banner producing the film. "Breaking News: A series of un-

forgettable events are about to come your way, all that happened on #AThursday!" RSVP announced their Twitter page. In the film, Yami essays the role

of Naina Jaiswal, a play school

teacher who takes 16 toddlers

hostage. Yami, who is known for her positive roles in films such as Vicky Donor, Uri: The Surgical Strike and Ginny Weds Sunny, will be play-

ing a grey character for the first time.

Manoj Bajpayee tests positive for Covid

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Manoj Bajpayee has tested psitive for Covid-19. The actor is currently living under home quarantine and is on med-

A statement issued by Bajpayee's team reads: "Manoj Bajpayee has tested Covid positive after his director was infected with it. The shoot has stopped it will resume in couple of months. "Manoj was shooting for the film Despatch which is produced by Ronnie Screwvala. Manoj Bajpayee is on medication and recovering well. He is in self-quarantine at home and following all precautions. We wish him for super recovery.'

On the work front, Bajpayee will next be seen playing a polie officer named ACP Avinash. in the upcoming digital film Silence... Can You Hear It. The mystery thriller film, also starring Prachi Desai, Arjun Mathur, Sahil Vaid, Vaquar, Barkha Singh and Garima Yagnik, premieres on March 26 on Zee 5. IANS

ASIM UTSAV - DAY 1 Darkness plays a character in Shababahakamane

FUN

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: Asim Utsav, a two-day drama festival organised in the memory of eminent artiste Asim Basu, kicked off here at Rabindra Mandap, Friday.

The event is being organised by Asim Basu Foundation(ABF).

On the first evening, the members of Uttar Purush, one of the oldest drama troupes of Bhubaneswar, presented Shababahakamane (The Pallbearers), a trendsetting play of late 1960s that changed the theatre literature in Odisha. This is one of the most talked about plays ever written by eminent playwright Bijoy Mishra.

The plot revolves around three



strangers, a couple and a corpse. The five enter an abandoned build-

heavy rain. The building houses a

ing on a night to get respite from man's body also. Suddenly, they discover that the dead man has

left a dying declaration indicating about hidden treasure inside the house. The revelation changes the relations between the five and they turn suspicious about each other oblivious to the fact that no one stands to gain anything.

The actors enacted their parts on a dark stage for the first 10 minutes of the play which bewildered the audience at the beginning.

Though Shababahakamane was an experimental play, it was ahead of its time and quite popular among the viewers when it was written, play's director Chakradhar Patra.

"Being part of Asim Utsav is a matter of pride and we feel honoured to present this play on this

occasion," added Patra.

Asim Kala, a painting exhibition showcasing the works of 16 well known female artists, was also held on the occasion. The expo was curated by young visual artist and art historian Firdausi Tabassum.

The dignitaries who graced the occasion as guests include Principal Commissioner of Income Tax Department Manoranjan Panigrahi. Odisha Natva Sangh president Haren Sahoo, theatre personality Banchhanidhi Patnaik and eminent playwright Sanghamitra Mishra. ABF's president Ramahari Jena, secretary Pabitra Mohan Kar and festival director Debadutta Pati were present on the occasion

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



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Across

1 Hungarian dish

5 Jellied garnish 8 Just say you're

sorry 9 Hilo garland

10 Excuse

12 Hot sauce

13 Do a slow burn

14 Poorly made

17 West Indies

island 19 Fine thread

4 Boosts

21 Varnish

22 Nut tree

ingredient

24 Knight fights

25 James Joyce

novel

Down 1 Tropical fruit

3 Get rid of

5 Having a bite

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

2 ET's craft

China 18 Olympic

contests 20 Tests 23 More, in Madrid

6 Fortifications

substitute

11 Exactly alike

16 Last imperial

dynasty of

13 Blood-red

15 Vacation

7 Coffee

SUDOKU

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

	1					9				Α	6		5	
	2	4		В	5				0					С
		3	8	1				6		4			0	
	9	О	0		Е									
6				3	7	8		2				В		9
8		О				5				2	В	Е	С	3
4			7	D			5					8	1315	
			Е	0								5		4
	7	1			8	С				D		9		6
	Α						8							
0			D							Е	5	4	8	
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D	4		5				2			С	1		9	3
Α				Ε	В			0				6	12.00	2
9			1			5	В				Α			7

SOLUTIONS

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SUDOKU



downtown



RAZING DOWN

		***	COVID-19 TRACKER						
	RAZING DOWN			INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD			
	An excavator engaged by		World	11,92,52,123	9,48,19,919	26,44,172			
	CMC razes Hunkeswar Mahadeb temple at Pilgrim		India	1,10,63,140	1,09,53,303	1,58,306			
	Road in Cuttack, Friday		Odisha	3,38,056	3,35,499	1,918			
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	COV	ID-19 1	RACK	ER
/		INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAI
	World	11,92,52,123	9,48,19,919	26,44,1
	India	1,10,63,140	1,09,53,303	1,58,3
,	Odisha	3,38,056	3,35,499	1,9

ADOPTABILITY OF THE SCRAPPAGE **POLICY NOT EASY: ADITYA PATRA**

Indian automakers are grappling with multiple headwinds like prolonged slowdown and the pandemic. Despite many challenges, the automakers and dealers gathered their strength and bounced back. The Managing Director of Aditya Group, Aditya Patra, spoke to Orissa POST and shared his insights of the pandemic period.



Your opinion on Atma Nirbhar

■ Of course, the campaign will

boost the entrepreneurship

and encourage every entre-

preneur. However, 'Make in

India' is not a minor topic be-

cause we are dependent on im-

port. The campaign will take

time to achieve success. Such

effort is required at least for

10 years to gain success in this

■ State government's initiative

See, we have a well-laid down

policies in our state to en-

courage entrepreneurs. I am

for entrepreneurs

Campaign

campaign.

■ What are the challenges Aditya Group faced during the pandemic?

■ The lockdown was imposed form March for which we couldn't implement our plans as we prepared for the financial year ending. The lockdown affected both the financial years. We faced financial crisis as there were certain fixed expenditures like electricity bill that we had to handle. It was also a challenge to facilitate all material for our employees so that they can work from home. We offer employment to 1100 and it is our responsibility for their safety. After the month of September, 2020, we started to achieve 70 per cent of regular monthly business. Our business started getting better from October. But we received relaxation of 4-5 months from banks on paying interest. It was a huge challenge for all of us and we are in a recovery

■ New Covid-19 strain has been detected in several states, what do you predict?

■ Yes, we have been watching hear

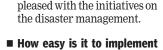
ing

the related news. But our gov ernment handled the Covidi-19 situation very well and I am sure the state government will take safety precautions to avoid infections. But if such outbreak comes again, it will be a

■ Is there any change in customers' buying behavior?

disaster for us.

■ We are now receiving orders from our customers for all models. Demand has increased now. Customers no longer prefer to exchange their vehicles but rather they wanted to have a back up vehicles to tackle such emergency. We can cater for the demand if adequate supplies are available



the scrappage policy?

Well, it was just introduced in the budget that the Centre will come with this policy. But, there is a requirement of good infrastructure to implement the scrappage policy. The adoptability

Declaring a vehicle as scrap is just a first step but converting it into scarp in reality is not that easy. We need huge investment and infrastructure.

'Govt should set an example by buying its own MSME products'

*The Covid-19 affected the small and medium enterprises in the country the hard*est. So much so that the sector is still fighting with its back to the wall to regain its pro-Covid business. Also, there are various policy issues that are nagging the SMEs. The sector has quite a few expectations from the government to overcome these challenges. Satwik Swain, Secretary General of Odisha **Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises** speaks to **Orissa POST** on the difficulties being faced by the OASME. Excerpts of an interview with him.

■ What was the impact of the pandemic on MSME sector?

■ The year of 2019-20 and 2020-21 are two worst years for the MSME sector in Odisha. First came cyclone Fani and then the pandemic. The entire sector is going through a bad phase now. General public has lost many things so has the economy. Raw material prices are at a all-time high. Demand is at an all-time low and the fixed expenses are increasing. Some sectors see the pandemic as an opportunity for them but the temporary. pandemic brought unexpected challenges to this sector.

■ How OASME tackle the situation? Except for a

few weekends, OASME office was open throughout the lockdown period. Our

team was there to coordinate with people. I can cite one example here. One of our members who is into apparel manufacturing got an order of patients' gowns from east coast railways but her factory was inside the containment zone. She called us & I requested Sanjay Kumar Singh, IAS, Secretary, Skill Development, government of Odisha to help the entrepreneur by opening Bhubaneswar ITI. He immediately instructed opening the ITI, And the entire order was executed by the ITI students. During the lockdown, from March 26 to April end

every day we distributed 300 plus meals to migrants with collaboration with CMC & DCP Cuttack. We have distributed more than 3 lakh masks through our district chapters. This step gave jobs to nearly 50 workers and 12 units. As far as our efforts with the government to assist MSMEs are concerned. I have personally discussed our issues with Union minis-Gadkari

■ What are our expectations to boost the MSME sector?

virtual mode. We have suggested

for automatic loan, waiver of

interest & many other things

which were reflected by a pack-

age declared by the PM. We have

also discussed many times with

the state inter ministerial com-

mittee & chief secretary re-

garding our demands to sup-

■ What are the steps taken to en-

■ The most important thing which

the OASME has done is a single

point facilitation center. Anyone

can come & get all types of sup-

port from here like preparation

of DPR, PAN, GST, IP facilitation

& many more. We also give ideas

to them. We have made infra-

structure to support young /bud-

ding entrepreneurs who can use

the office space free of cost. We

are in the process of making

Odisha's first engineering clus-

ter & common facility centre at

Chaudwar where anyone can

use the facilities & machines for

manufacturing products by pay-

ing a very minimum charge. We

are also coming up with an in-

cubation cum production centre

at Mancheswar, where budding

entrepreneurs will take train-

ing on apparel and food pro-

cessing simultaneously and use

the equipment for one year after

training for their own production.

courage young entrepreneurs?

port the sector.

■ Only one expectation from the government's: A clear stand and implementation of its vision to develop the sector.

■ What are your suggestions for the upcoming MSME policy?

ଧରିତ୍ରୀ | OrissaPOST **EMINANCE AWARDS**

> ■ There are many suggestions. The government is keen for new MSMEs but there is a big question on the sustainability of the new & existing MSEs. Finance can be arranged but marketing is always a challenge. The government should set an example for others by buying its own MSME products. Each & every project, procurement of government must be from the state MSEs. We have a lot of expectations from the upcoming procurement policy by MSME department.

How can it be smooth to bring transparency in procurement system?

■ The Centre brought GeM for transparency in procurement but it doesn't give priority to manufacturers. Only traders are getting benefits from this. There is no inspection system which is a big question on quality. I would like to suggest to the Centre to promote manufactures in GeM. I understand there are many filters. Yet it is going to be a big place for tender fixing & open corruption. I can cite examples. As far as the state government is concerned they must come out their own procurement system like e-tendering system in works. It can be Omart or OGeM where MSMEs, Start-Ups, SHGs, weavers & all other sectors can get a platform to sale their products with a robust inspection mechanism like RITEs for Railways or PDIs by DEPM office in a time-bound

manner.

SC refuses to intervene in Aditya death case

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 12: The Supreme Court Friday refused to issue any direction with regard to a petition filed by the mother social activist and motivational speaker, Aditya Dash, seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the mysterious death of her son.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Navin Sinha and Krishna Murari observed that the writ petition filed by Padmalaya Dash, the mother of Aditya Dash, is not maintainable as an application to this effect is already pending before the Orissa High Court. The apex court also refused to give any opinion or pass a direction to the High Court to dispose of the petition filed before the HC within a stipulated time.

The court disposed of the matter with liberty to withdraw the

Significantly, Padmalaya had pleaded the apex court to direct CBI to initiate an investigation into the mysterious death of Aditya. The petitioner also prayed the apex court to issue directions to the Orissa High Court to dispose of the petition filed before it in a time bound manner.

The petitioner had contended that almost nine months have elapsed, but the state Crime Branch is yet to get any breakthrough

"The investigation is going on at a snail's pace and no direct or indirect evidence was found yet, the petitioner contended.

Significantly, Aditya's mutilated body was found on the railway tracks near Lingaraj Temple Road passenger halt in Bhubaneswar July 7, 2020.

Govt nod to 8 investment proposals worth ₹1,214Cr

The projects would create employment opportunities for **2,427 persons**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The State-Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA), led by Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, Friday approved eight proposals envisaging investment of around ₹1,214 crore and fresh employment opportunities for 2,427 persons.

According to Industries Principal Secretary Hemant Kumar Sharma, the investment proposals are mainly from manufacturing, plastic, food processing and hospitality sectors. "The proposers are well known industrial houses. The projects will not only boost the sectors, but also create employment opportunities," Sharma pointed out.

Giving in-principle approval to the projects, the Chief Secretary directed the departments concerned to facilitate early grounding of the projects through proactive support. Mahapatra also directed to make proper assessment of land and water requirements for the projects.

According to sources, Energise Minerals Private Limited would set up a 2.75 MTPA iron ore beneficiation plant and a 1.2 MTPA pellet plant at Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj district. The ₹256-crore initiative would provide employ-



■ Energise Minerals Private Limited would set up a 2.75 MTPA iron ore beneficiation plant and a 1.2 MTPA pellet plant at Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj

■ Indalc Spirits Pvt Ltd plans to set up of a 200 KLPD grain-based distillery plant and 6 MW Cogeneration Plant with an investment of ₹215.15 crore in Deogarh

FALCON REAL ESTATE PRIVATE LIMITED AIMS TO SET UP A 5-STAR HOTEL IN BHUBANESWAR WITH AN INVESTMENT OF ₹120.26 CRORE

ment opportunities to 274 persons.

Indalc Spirits Pvt Ltd plans to set up of a 200 KLPD grain-based distillery plant and 6 MW Cogeneration Plant with an investment of ₹215.15 crore in Deogarh. It will generate employment opportunities for over

Mash Spirits Pvt Ltd aims at setting up a 200 KLPD grain-based distillery plant along with a bottling unit and a 6 MW Cogeneration plant with an investment of ₹204.60 cr in Jharsuguda. The project will generate employment opportunities for 185 persons.

ITC Limited has proposed to set up a 5-star hotel at Dumduma in Bhubaneswar with investment of ₹141.14 crore which would provide

employment to 120 persons. Similarly, Falcon Real Estate Private Limited aims to set up a 5star hotel in Bhubaneswar with an investment of ₹120.26 crore. It would

create employment opportunities for over 900 persons.

Other proposals include expansions of manufacturing unit of Britannia Industries Limited at Khurda and production of Refractories by Sarvesh Refractories Private Limited in Sundargarh. Moreover, Purv Packaging Private Limited has proposed setting up of a manufacturing unit for production of Cast Polypropylene Film and Metallised Film at Paradip Plastic

Park in Jagatsinghpur. The Industrial Promotion & Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited managing director Nitin Bhanudas Jawale said that major investors like ArcelorMittal are considering Odisha as a flourishing destination of investment, thanks to the 'ease of doing business' and promotional policies of the state gov-

HOLDING TAX HIKE DECRIED



BJP activists gherao BMC office in Bhubaneswar, Friday, condemning the 'excessive' hike in holding tax by the

Krushi Odisha mascot unveiled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: Krushi Odisha Mahotsav 2021 will be organised at Biju Patnaik Play

Ground, Baramunda here from March 15 to 19. The official mascot for the event, 'Mushroom', was unveiled at Biju Patnaik Play Ground by Agriculture and Farmers'

Empowerment Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo.

The mahotsav will be organised by the

Agriculture department in association with Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

Minister Sahoo said that for de-

velopment of agriculture the farmers need all kinds of assistance such as skill development, knowledge about new agricultural techniques, infrastructure development.

> market support in distribution, loan availability and they will get all this at Krushi Odisha Mahotsav which is a great place for farmers to learn new skills and techniques of farming.

This year's mahostav theme is 'Integrated Agriculture and Farmers Development'. Odisha ranks first in production of straw mushroom and

second in overall mushroom production, said the minister. There will be 160 stalls at the Krushi Odisha Fair and it will be inaugurate by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik March 15, said Sahoo.

STF seizes 3 quintal fake tobacco

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The Special Task Force (STF) of state Crime Branch has seized huge quantities of duplicate tobacco during raids in Rourkela and its periphery. The STF seized fake tobacco weighing around three quintals valued at ₹10 lakh.

Following a tip-off, teams of STF with the help of local police carried out raids at many places in Rourkela and its periphery area of Sundargarh. The teams came across huge illegal storage, manufacture and selling of fake tobacco products during the raids. They seized heavy quantity of duplicate tobacco materials from the possession of one Shyamsundar Chandu of Uditnagar area, Kamal-Lochan Sahoo of Sector-5 and Tipu Chourasia of GT Lane of Rourkela.



GST officials raid real estate firm

Bhubaneswar: The state goods and services tax (GST) and sales tax authorities Friday carried out raids at several places including the office of a real estate firm in Bhubaneswar. An eight-member team under Joint Tax Commissioner Umesh Tripathy conducted the raids at the office of DD Builders at Plot No 33-F in BJB Nagai area and at several places in Bhawanipatna, Berhampur and Cuttack. The GST authorities claimed that Subash Agarwal and three other directors of the company have misap propriated input tax credit of Rs 6 crore by producing fake bills of cement, iron rod and other materials from ghost dealers.

1 fresh fatality pushes Covid toll to 1,918

Bhubaneswar: State's Covid-19 tally surged to 3,38,056 Friday as 64 more people tested positive for the infection, while one fresh fatality pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,918, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said. Thirtyseven new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 27 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing. Sundargarh district reported the highest number of new cases at 10, followed by Mayurbhanj (eight) and Cuttack (seven), the official said.

-WASSUP TODAY -

BHUBANESWAR

- Cyclothon by BSF, BSF headquarters, Gajapati Nagar, 6am
- Ashwini Swasthya Sammilani,
- International Women's Day
- celebration by INTUC, Ramanujam convention hall, near Hotel Swosti Premium, CS Pur, 10.30am
- Abhiruchi Samman by Satva Nagai Ladies' Forum, Geeta Govinda

CUTTACK

■ Day-night cricket league by Event Management Association of Odisha, Nimpur Ground, Jagatpur,

- Badadanda Seva, 6.30am ■ District-level Wrestling Competition, Sea Beach Club, 9 am
- 6th Annual Function of Suprava, Youth Hostel, 10 am
- Day-night volleyball competition, Sundarjaga Kalyan Mandap, 5pm

Programmes/announcements for wassup today may be sent to downtown@orissapost.com for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our erification, but not for publication.

End of road for Biju Yuva Vahini

THERE IS NO BUDGETARY PROVISION FOR BIJU YUVA VAHINI DURING CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The state government's youth engagement programme Biju Yuva Vahini has remained non-functional as no fund allocation was made for the scheme during financial year (FY) 2020-21, Sports and Youth Services Minister Tusharkanti Behera told the Assembly Friday

In a written reply to an un-starred question (No 1565) raised by BJP legislator Bhabani Shankar Bhoi, the minister said, "There is no budgetary provision for Biju Yuva Vahini (BYV) during current financial year. Therefore, it is not functioning now.'

is not carrying out any work for the interof public in any part the state.

was no expenditure made on this

made for the same," the minister

BYV is not carrying out

any part of

TUSHARKANTI

SPORTS AND YOUTH SERVICES

BEHERA

MINISTER

any work for the interest

Though the minister refrained from directly saying that the programme is closed, it indicates that government is not going to continue the scheme as there is no budgetary allocation for the same.

The statement of the minister sparked political row over BYV. Commenting on this issue, Leader of Opposition (LoP) Pradipta Naik "The scheme was launched to use our youths for the benefit of the ruling party during elections.

strategy to organise cricket tournaments in every zilla parishad zone and spend Rs 3 crore in each

The ruling party has decided to spend another Rs 100 crore to strengthen its vote bank for upcoming panchayat and urban polls, he alleged.

"Nearly Rs 500 crore was looted from state exchequer to fund BYV. Instead of spending the money on BYV, the government could have

Now, they have adopted another

launched to use youths

for the benefit

of the ruling

PRADIPTA NAIK

Excise dept records negative growth



YEAR

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The state Excise department suffered a major setback in revenue collection owing to Covid-19 pandemic during financial year 2020-21. This was revealed through the departmental Standing Committee report tabled in the Assembly Friday.

The report claimed that the department registered a negative revgovernment also saw a dip in the year, hinting at the lower sales of the liquor in the state.

The department claims that the main source of Excise revenue in the state is through imposition of duty on IMFL and beer. There are 1,163 Foreign Liquor OFF shops, 566 ON shops, 19 ON Clubs, 72 Beer Parlour and 36 Military Canteen in the state selling the liquors.

The department also levies con-

GROWTH %

721 SC girls tied knot with upper caste boys: Saraka

Hindu girls belonging to scheduled caste (SC) community have tied the nuptial knot with upper caste Hindu males in the state during the current financial year, ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Minister Jagannath Saraka told the

Assembly, Friday.

In a written reply to an unstarred question raised by BJD legislator Aswini Kumar Patra, the minister said, "The highest 173 such inter-caste marriages have been registered in Balasore district while Jagatsinghpur district reported 121 inter-caste mar-

He said 67 SC girls have married to other caste males in Bhadrak district, followed by Keonihar with 53 such marriages, Ganjam 48, Puri 39, Cuttack 31, Nayagarh 23, Kendrapara 22, Sambalpur 21,



The state govt provides one-time grant of ₹2.50 lakh to couples opting for inter-caste marriages

Mayurbhanj 20, Angul & Dhenkanal 12 each, Jharsuguda 11 and Bolangir 10. Nine intercaste marriages of SC females have been reported from each of Sonepur, Khurda and Bargarh districts, he said.

Similarly, Kalahandi, Nuapada and Malkangiri districts have reported five such marriages each while four inter-caste marriages were registered in Gajapati district, three each in Boudh & Rayagada, two in Kandhamal and one each in Sundargarh, Jajpur and Deogarh districts, said Saraka. However, no such marriages have been reported from two districts— Koraput and Nabarangpur, the minister said in his reply.

To promote inter-caste marriages, the state government is providing one-time assistance to such couples. In order to avail of the one-time grant of Rs 2.50 lakh, the marriage should be between upper caste Hindus and Hindus of scheduled castes. Sources said such marriages can help bring about social harmony in society.

Retd HC judge to head fee structure panel

poses," Naik said.

Similarly, Pradesh Congress

Committee (PCC) president

Niranjan Patnaik said, "As there

is no election around, the BJD does

not require Biju Yuva Vahini anv-

more. The ruling party will come

up with some other 'Vahini' when

there will be elections after three

had decided to launch the BYV

scheme. Later, the Sports and Youth

Services department has made a

total budgetary allocation of Rs

450.49 crore for a period of three

to promote leadership and spirit

of volunteerism among the youths

through social action at gram pan-

chayat (GP) and urban local body

(ULB) level.

The objective of the scheme was

The state Cabinet in March 2018

BHUBANESWAR: Amid uproar by Opposition MLAs over issues related to paddy procurement, the state Assembly Friday passed the Odisha Professional Educational Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Fixation of Fee) Amendment Bill, 2021.

As per the amendment, a retired judge of Orissa High Court, nominated by the Chief Justice, will be appointed as the chairperson of the Fee Structure Committee

(FSC) in **TECHNICAL** place of the **EDUCATION** Vice

Chancellor (VC) of Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT)

As the BPUT is the affiliating university which enforces the fee structure of technical or professional institutions, it may not be proper for its VC to function as the chairperson of the FSC. Therefore, it was proposed to appoint a retired judge of Orissa High Court, said **Technical Education Minister** Premananda Navak.

Moreover, the government has made the Skill Development and Technical Education Secretary as chairperson of the Policy Planning Body. Earlier, Industries Secretary was the chairman of the panel. The amendment was necessitated as the technical education has been taken out of the purview of Industries

2011-12 ₹1379.91 cr 26.09 % 2012-13 ₹1499.91 cr 8.69 % 2013-14 ₹1780.29 cr 18.69 % 2014-15 ₹2038.79 cr 14.52 % 25.99 % 2015-16 ₹2568.68 cr 8.47 % 2016-17 ₹2786.23 cr 2017-18 ₹3221.03 cr 15.71 % 2018-19 21.87 % ₹3925.41 ci 2019-20 ₹4495.52 cr 14.52 % 2020-21 -19.84 %

COVID IMPACT ON REVENUE

EXCISE REVENUE

The Standing Committee report claimed that the dept registered -19.84 per cent growth in FY 2020-21 against 14.52% in FY 2019-20

enue growth of -19.84 per cent in FY 2020-21 against 14.52 per cent in FY 2019-20. This is the first time the department witnessed a negative growth rate since 2009-2010, data suggested. The department could generate

only Rs 2789.89 crore in the current fiscal against Rs 4495.52 crore generated in 2019-20. The government attributed the negative growth to the pandemic which marred the prospects of revenue collection.

The report claimed that the lift ing of India Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and beer from the state

sideration money on IMFL OFF/ON/Beer Parlour and Club ON shops every month. The government also gets duty on the IMFL and Beer lifted by the retailers. The retailers are bound to lift a Minimum Guaranteed Quantity of IMFL and Beer which ensures a guaranteed amount of duty.

The report claimed that in 2019-20 the total lifting of IMFL remained at 532.35 lakh LPL (London Proof Litres) while beer lifting remained at 935.79 lakh BL (Bulk Litre). However, the lifting remained low in 2020-21. The state saw lifting of only 316.94 lakh LPL of IMFL while the beer quantity remained

Meanwhile, the sales of country liquor also suffered a setback as against the lifting of 78.62 lakh LPL of country liquor in 2019-20. the current fiscal saw lifting of only 36.24 lakh LPL.

State creates record in

ganja seizure: Report

Bhubaneswar, March 12: A de-

partmental Standing Committee

report on Home department

Friday talked about large-scale

seizure of ganja and other items

POST NEWS NETWORK

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary Public, Barbil, I, Chahata Dei (P.No. 096830) posted at JCO unit of Tata Steel Ltd., Joda. My name is mentioned in my Son Abhilash Pradhan's certificates as Chahata Sahu. I declare that Chahata Dei & Chahata Sahu both are the name of same person.

LOST

I, Arun Kumar Padhan, S/o- Late. Giridhari Padhan, R/o- Village/P.O.-Papanga, P.S./Tahasil-Bheden, Dist.- Bargarh declare that I have purchased Ac. 01. 76 dec. of Land vide Regd. No. 518/26.07.2002 of S.R.O. Bheden. That while I was coming from Papanga to Bheden on dt. 26.11.2014 the aforesaid original sale deed along with other documents are lost from my custody, inspite of my strenuous search I could not found the same. If Any body found Please contact me in my Mobile No. 7894002009.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

16 ultras neutralised; 21 surrendered in 2020

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: A Home department Standing Committee report tabled in the Assembly Friday claimed that the impact of Naxalism in the state has reduced in 2020.



It also talked about the incidents of Naxal attacks, surrenders, neutralisation and others. "A total of 41 CPI (Maoist) related incidents, including 27 exchanges of fire on police initiatives were reported in the state during the period in which 7 civilians lost lives and 2 security personnel attained martyrdom. Security forces achieved significant successes in the counter of Left Wing Extremism (LWE)

It also added, "While 16 hardcore CPI (Maoist) cadres including 1 State Committee Member (SCM), 1 Divisional Committee Member (DCM) and Area Committee Members (ACMS) were neutralised in separate incidents of exchanges of fire with police, 1 Maoist died in confrontation with the villagers. Besides, 4 persons were arrested in connection with their involvement in Maoist activities.

The department also claimed that 21 naxals surrendered before the police during the period. "60 guns including 26 quality weapons, 63 IEDS and large quantity of ammunition, explosive materials and other articles were recovered during anti-Maoist operations," the report said.

"The overall Left Wing Extremism scenario arising out of CPI (Maoist) activities showed progressive and sustainable improvement in the State during the financial year 2020-21 (i.e. from 1.1.2020 to 31.12,2020), including Swabhiman Anchal of Malkangiri district and Kalahandi Rayagada Kandhamal axis due to pro-active security and administrative re-

Health schemes suffered setback

Bhubaneswar, March 12: Several ongoing health and disease control programmes suffered a setback owing to Covid-19 pandemic, said a Standing Committee report of the Health and Family Welfare depart-

ment tabled in the Assembly Friday. The report of the Public Health department claimed that the most troublesome vector-borne disease

lence while more malaria positive cases were reported from the state as compared to the previous years.

The department admitted the spike in malaria cases and attributed the same to Covid-19 situation.

"The year 2020 ended with reporting of 41,738 cases which shows 5.5% increase over 39,665 cases in 2019," the report said.

Similarly, the government was

ples for detecting dengue. 'Surveillance has come down in 2020 due to Covid. 28.497 blood samples were tested in 2019 whereas in 2020 only 5,582 samples were tested," the department said.

Likewise, the National Programme for Control of Blindness also suffered a setback. Several sub parts of the programme saw poor records during 2020-21.



The report claimed that Odisha created a record by seizing large amount of ganja in the country.

'In 2020, Odisha Police, registered more than 1,000 NDPS cases and arrested over 1.800 accused persons. During the year, 1,374 quintals of ganja, 34 kg brown sugar were seized and more than 18,000 acres of illegal cannabis cultivation were destroyed (crop

year 2019-20)," the report said. It said, "The seizure of 1,374 quintals of ganja or cannabis in 2020 is a record. This is for the first time that any state in India has crossed the landmark seizure of 1,000 quintals (100 tonne) of cannabis. Last year seizure was more than 600 quintals.'

"The seizure of 34 kg brown sugar/heroin is also significant and record breaking for Odisha. It is important to mention that this seizure quantity is more than last 10 years of cumulative seizure of Odisha police put together."

FUN ON THE BEACH



ISEMENTS CONTACT

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488. Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373

Fires contained in Similipal

A CENTRAL TEAM IS CAMPING IN THE SANCTUARY TO ASSESS DAMAGE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Baripada, March 12: The fires that had been raging for over a fortnight in various parts of Similipal sanctuary have been completely doused. Two days of rains helped in containing the blaze, a report said.

Meanwhile, a central team has reached the sanctuary Friday. The team comprising IGF of NTCA Amit Mallick and RCCF of Eastern Regional Office of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Bhubaneswar, Subrat Mahapatra took stock of the situation in core areas like Upper Barha Kamuda, Gudugudia, Barehipani, Nana and Usuki and collected data on damage.

The central team has discussed the fires with field director of the STP M Yogajayanad, two deputy directors Jajnadatt Pati and Saikiran, five rangers and foresters.

The central team has laid stress on protection of tigers. Its members also talked to members of various Vana Surakhya Samitis, Jungle Surakhya Samitis, SHGs, tribal res-



idents of 51 villages in the core areas and environmentalists

Meanwhile, the task force on forest fire formed by the government Friday said that it is keeping all out effort for mitigation and management of forest fire in the State. The govt also starts the Toll free No of PCCF office Fire Cell started which is 1800-3457-158.

Task Force chairman Sandeep Tripathi, the former principal chief conservator of forest (PCCF) Friday said "As per the FSI forest fire alert the Slate has registered 700 fire alerts in the state Friday with only 9 fire alerts in Similipal as against 1048 forest alerts yesterday and fire situation in State is under control now. Further, parts of the State, including Similipal have experienced

spread of fires in the state. The government has asked all field officials to be on full alert to prevent any proliferation of fire in field given the prevailing hot weather conditions in the State, conduct intensive night patrolling

rains yesterday, which would be

congenial in stopping any further

& promptly respond to the fire alerts. The daily forest fire points generated using MODIS & SNPP satellite data received from FSI by Forest IT & Geomatic Centre (FITGC) are being made available real time upto beat level.

Forest Staffs after navigating to fire points and dousing fire are uploading the info with photos in OFMS. Till now more than 95% of all these fire points are addressed in the field. 24X7 Forest Fire Cell in PCCF/ PCCF WL & all DFOs is functioning.

The DFOs has been directed to enhance community engagement with assistance of PRIs and Self Help Groups. A series of meetings for awareness among local communities involving 2718 VSS have been conducted. Incentives to about 3000 VSS for their active role in control of fire has been provided.

Continuous personal monitoring/ review of prevailing fire situation with field officials by Government/ Task Force is being taken up for forest fire mitigation

Kalimela LAMPS VIMSAR authorities order probe into ragging plaint post News Network

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, March 12: The managing director in-charge of Kalimela LAMPCS in Malkangiri district was suspended Friday over alleged irregularities in farmer registration for Kharif paddy procurement.

The district Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies suspended the official named Saroj Kumar Sundaray, following an enquiry.

According to sources, irregularities were detected in the farmer registration during the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2020-21 in Kalimela

A large number of farmer registration forms are not available with the LAMPS office in Kalimela. While facing the enquiry committee. Sundaray failed to explain how the ST lands were cultivated by non-ST farmers. He could not even clarify who made the slip-up in documentation during the registration of farmers.

Finding Sundaray at fault, the higherups took action against him leading to his suspension from duty until fur-

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 12: A student of the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla has complained Friday about being ragged by seniors. Acting on the complaint, the anti-ragging cell of the premier medical institute of western Odisha has launched a probe.

Sources said that the second year MBBS student of the institute complained about ragging early Friday morning, when the institution's anti-ragging squad was on a routine visit in one of the hostels.

Later, the officials informed about the complaint to the Deancum- Principal of VIMSAR, Jayashri Dora. The principal then directed the anti-ragging official conduct a probe into the matter and submit a report as



soon as possible.

"The anti-ragging cell will verify the authenticity of the allegations and the truth will emerge after the panel submits the report," Dora informed.

The anti-ragging cell routinely visits hostels here to verify whether any student is facing any kind of mental or physical torture.

It has not yet been ascertained whether the victim was subjected to mental or physical tor-

Fires play havoc in forests of Bolangir

Fires reported from 804 points; staff shortage hinders fire fighting exercise

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, March 12: Forest fires have been raging in various forests in Bolangir. The forest department is trying its best to contain fires, but efforts are reportedly ineffective in some pockets, a report said.

Reports citing satellite images of the fires available from January till March 10 say, fires were detected at 756 points in forested pockets. Thursday, fires were reported from 48 points Thursday alone. Fires have destroyed trees in Gandhrel reserve forest on the outskirts of the Bolangir town. Being informed by some conscious citizens, DFO Sameer Satpathy ordered quick action for dousing fire. Forest officials and firefight ers had tried to douse fires Thursday. The DFO also visited the four fire spots. The DFO said that when fire-fighting teams were taken to one place, fire was reported from another place. "Some people are suspected to be deliberately setting fire to forests," he

The Vana Surkahya Samiti is working at Gandhrel village. But its members did not react on forest fires. There were bundles of kendu leaves at the spots where fires were reported. The DFO suspected that fires were ignited so as to pave the way for easy collection of kendu leaves and mahul flowers

It was learnt that fires starting from foothill areas spread to uphill areas. On the other hand, staff shortage of the forest department has been a hindrance in the firefighting exercise. There are only 110 members in the fire squad. They are unable to tackle fires properly at right time.

It was suspected that fires might have destroyed flora and fauna to a great extent in forests, which have not been assessed till date.

₹16L spent for project goes down drain

Khariar, March 12: With summer having set in, people of Chicher village under Khariar block of Nuapapda district are facing water crisis. One of two tube wells in the village has gone defunct while the tube well that works now is delivering fluoridemixed water which is dangerous to health, local lamented.

Besides, a drinking water project built at a cost of Rs 16 lakh is out of order, a report said.

Amid the water crisis, people are bound to collect contaminated water



from pits, two km from the village. Villagers alleged that the purpose for which the drinking water project was set up at Tuligan in 2016-17 has failed and Rs 16 lakh has gone down the drain. The locals said that due to

faulty survey by the PH Department in site selection, the drinking water project was left in mess. Water is not reaching the stand posts at Cherigaon, Hernapada and Bagpada.

As mercury is rising, water sources are going dry. Water crisis has been deepening, they rued. Chicher village, its two nearby hamlets like Hernapada and Bagpada have a population of 3000. Villagers had taken up the issue with the local sarpanch and a junior engineer of the PHD, no step was taken to set the drinking water project right. JE. Robert Pradhan said steps will be taken soon.

Tender Call Notice 01/2020-21

Name of the Work

Lathipada of Surada Block

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO.I: CUTTACK

E-Mail I.D.-eepwdcuttack@gmail.com Tel./ Fax No.(0671)-2304128 **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" procurement Notice** e-procurement Notice for Building work

Bid Identification No. E.E. CTC(R&B)-35 of 2020-21

Pilarim Amenities Community Centre at Mount

House Church, Chandi Chhak, Cuttack such as Construction of Community Hall for the year 2020-21 (Civil & E.I.).

2. Estimated Cost Rs.86,59,929/-5 (Five) calendar Months Period of completion 15.03.2021 to 5PM of Date & time of sale & receipt :-31.03.2021 of bid document

5 P.M. of 31.03.2021 6. Date & time of Opening of :- 11 A.M. of 03.04.2021

5. Last date / time of receipt of :-

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, SURADA - 761108
Phone No.: 0681-9270135, E-mail: ori-sorada@nic.in

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Block Development Officer, Surada Block, Ganjam on behalf of Government of Odisha invites percentag

Security

(EMD) 1%

(in Rs.)

Value of the

vorks put to bid in

Rs. (Approxmiate

Bids 7. Name and address of the :-

Executive Engineer, Cuttack Officer Inviting Bid (R&B) Division No.I, Cuttack Further details can be seen from the State Govt. portal "https:// tendersodisha.gov.in.

Cost of BID

Documents

6000/-

6000/-

Sd./- (Er. P.K. Majhi), Executive Engineer Cuttack (R&B) Division No.I

OIPR-34091/11/0017/2021

No.

Period of

Completion

month

6 months

6 months

not refundable in Calendar Contracto

/Dt.10.3.21

Class of

C&B

C&B

Tipsy youth bludgeons mother to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Thursday night.



Munda. The Barbil police seized the body. A case of murder was registered. The accused Kishore was arrested. However, the Kishore had killed his fa-

Barbil, March 12: In a shocking incident, a drunken youth killed his mother by hitting her with a brick at Gadha Hutting under Barbil police limits in Keonjhar The deceased was iden-

tified as 55-year-old Sombari Munda. The accused is her son Kishore



exact reason behind the motive of the murder has not been known. Police said, the accused had earlier served jail term for three years. Chalu Babanga, the elder brother of the accused, said that ther Dumi Munada in a similar fashion eight years ago and was in jail for three years.

Folk artistes creating awarness on agriculture schemes through a street play in Daringbadi area

CISF celebrates foundation day at Damanjodi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Damaniodi, March 12: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), country's premier security agency, at Nalco's Damanjodi project site recently celebrated its 52nd foundation day, a report said.

The jawans participated in a parade at the parade ground to mark the occasion. Nalco group GM Sushil Kumar Padhi and senior commandant Alok Kumar of CISF received the guard of honour and gave away prizes to the best cadets.

Padhi deliberated on the services and dedication of the CISF jawans in the coutry. All the CISF jawans and staff were present in this function.

The CISF provides security cover to 300 industrial units,

government infrastructure डंडियन बैंक projects and facilities and es-🛕 इलाहाबाद tablishments located all over India.

Construction of Sub-Health Centre Building (HWC) at 20616 Gajalabadi of Surada Block Centre Building (HWC) at 20.616 20616

rate bid in Single for the works as Detailed in Table below

Construction of Centre Building (HWC) at The sale of bid document shall from Dt.16.03.2021 at 3.00 P.M. and close on dated 30.03.2021 at 5.00 P.M. during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Bids shall be received on or before 5.00 P.M. of Dt.30.03.2021 through Registered Post, Speed Post or it can be placed in the box kept in Office for the

said purpose Bid documents consists of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contractors and other necessary documents & collected from Block Office or can be downloaded from the

website www.ganjam.nic.in. After the date, time and receipt of bid is over the original bids security and Demand Draft towards cos of bid document shall be submitted along with the bid or Registered Post in the office of the undersigned from Dt.16.03.2021 at 3.00 P.M. to 30.03.2021 at 5.00 P.M. during office hours on working days failing which the bid will be rejected. The received BID security and BID cost will be verifited at 11.00 A.M. or

Dt.05.04.2021. The bid received shall be opened at 11.00 A.M. on Dt.05.04.2021 in the O/o. the Block Developme Officer, Surada in the presence of bidders who wish to attend. The bidders who participated in the bid can witness the opening of the BIDs. If the office happens to be closed in the last date of the opening of the bids as specified the bids will be opened in the next working day at the time of the same time and venue

The authority reserves the right to cancel any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation can also be seen in the paper

Engineering contractors desiring to avail to exemption facility of EMD should applied specifically their application with an affidavit and submit the same tender document. He/She should also produce original contract licence at the time of opening of tender document to make necessary entry to the effect as such facilities are limited to three pariticipants in tender during a financial year, otherwise the tender rejected on the spot during opening tender

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti, Surada

Date of

ossession

Notice

09.03.2021

Indian Bank ALLAHABAD

Old Station Square Branch, A/27, Cuttack Road, Near Jharapada Over Bridge, Bhubaneswar-751006

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Outstanding as or the date of

Demand Notice

Rs.5,54,24,903/-

with further

Where as, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Indian Bank (Erstwhile Allahabad Bank) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notice on the dates noted against Account as mentioned hereinafter, calling them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower / Guarantors / Mortgagors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the under noted Borrower/

in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said rules on the date: mentioned against Account The Borrower / Guarantors / Mortgagors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Indian Bank (Erstwhile Allahabad Bank), Old Station Square Branch for

Guarantors / Mortgagors and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described here-in-below

the amount and interest thereon mentioned against account herein below

The attention of the borrower's detailed hereunder is invited to the provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time

Sabik Plot No. 14/3734 in Khata No. 647, Mouza- Bhubaneswar Sahar, Unit-30,

Laxmisagar-1, having land area of 0.050 Acre in the name of Pushpanjali Patra,

Bounded by: East- Land of Pathani Behera and others, West- Property of Smt

Manjubala Patra, North- Property of Kusum Kumari Patra, South- Road, (2) All that

(1) All that residential building situated over Hal

Plot No. 349/3467, Hal Khata No. 173, Part

lable, to redeelli tile Secured Assets .	
me & Address of Borrower/	Description of the
uarantors / Mortgagors	Immovable Properties

Plot No. 138, Ashok Nagar Bhubaneswar- 751009, Partner Guarantor: Mr Dwaraka Nath Patro, S/o: Late P. Saru Patro Partners / Mortgagors / Guarantors : (1) Mrs Puspanjali Patro, W/o: M Dwaraka Nath Patro, (2) Mr Uma Shankar Patro, S/o: Mr Dwaraka Nath Patro, (3) Mrs Subhashree Patro W/o: Mr Uma Shankar Patro, all are residing at Plot No. 349/3467, Nea Old Station Square, Cuttack Road, Bhubaneswar-6, Mortgagors / Guarantors: (1) Mrs Udaymala Patro, W/o: Mr Surya Narayan Patro, Plot No. 349(P), Near Swagat Hotel Cuttack Road, Bhubaneswar 751006, (2) Bilkis Patro, D/o: Mi Dwaraka Nath Patro, Plot No. 349/ 3467, Near Old Station Square

Cuttack Road, Bhubaneswar-6

Place: Bhubaneswar Date: 12.03.2021

Borrower: M/s Dwaraka Jeweller

Udayamala Patra, Bounded by: East- Property of Surya Narayan Patra, West- Property of Gourang. Sundar, North- Road, South- Property of Ashok Kumar Patra, (3) All that residential Flat in the name of Subhashree Patra at Flat No. 301, 3rd Floor, Block-B, Apartment Name: Shivnath Life Style, situated over Plot No. 837/1952, Khata No. 1033, Corresponding GA Plot No. 338 & 837 at Saheed Nagar, Tahasil - Bhubaneswar, Bounded by: East- Flat No. 302, West- Corridor, North- Lift, South- Open Space, (4) All that residential Flat in the name of Subhashree Patra at Flat No. 104, 1st Floor, Block-B, Apartment Name: Shivnath Life Style, situated over Plot No. 837/1952, Khata No. 1033, Corresponding GA Plot No. 338 & 837 at Saheed Nagar, Tahasil - Bhubaneswar, Bounded by: East- Stair Case, West- Open Space North- Corridor/Flat No. 103, South- Open Space, (5) All that Open Plot in the name of **Umashankar Patra** Mouza- Dasabatia, Khata No. 32, Plot No. 34, Sub Plot No. 60, Area- Ac0.055 decimal, Sub Registrar Bhubaneswar, Dist- Khurda, Bounded by: East- Road, West- Plot of Bilkis Patra, North- Road, South- Plo No. 47, **(6)** All that Open Plot in the name of **Bilkis Patra**, Mouza- Dasabatia, Khata No. 32, Plot No. 34 Sub Plot No. 59, Area- Ac0.055 decimal, Sub Registrar- Bhubaneswar, Dist- Khurda, Bounded by: East Plot of Umashankar Patra, West- Road, North- Road, South- Plot No. Seller Land (Plot No. 47).

residential building situated over Hal Plot No. 349/3465, Khatiyan No. 1593/948, Mouza- Bhubaneswar Sahar, Unit-30, Laxmisagar-1, having land area of 0.050 Acre in the name o

Demand

Notice

19.05.2020

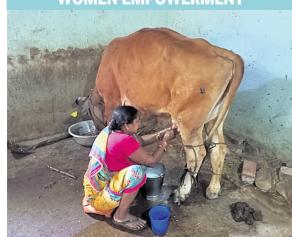
Aruna milks ₹45K from dairy farming

POST NEWS NETWORK

Badagaon, March 12: Even as the state government has been promoting women empowerment through a host of schemes and activities, a woman of Sundragarh. Aruna Meher, has become self reliant by taking up dairy. She is earning Rs 40,000 to Rs 45,000 monthly from dairy. Aruna has set an example for others in Badgaon area.

According to reports, Aruna wanted to do something that can empower her financially. She stepped out of four walls of the house and was a member of the SHG. She was happy to know the government has been providing financial support to the SHGs for various income-generating activities. In 2009, she bought a cow





and later bought three more cows. At that time, earning from this small dairy business was meagre. She became members of Shanti

SHG in 2019. As a member of the SHG, she took Rs 90,000 as a bank loan. She purchased two jersey cows. As ill luck would have it, after some months, the two cows died, inflicting a heavy loss for her. But she did not feel let down.

Rather, she put in more efforts in the dairy business and gradually bought cows. Now she has 20 jersey cows in her farm while 10 of them are giving milk.

Her farm is producing 80 to 100 litres of milk every day. Her family members have been helping her in the dairy business.

"Initially, I was doing mushroom farming and later gave more attention to dairy. Cows are like children who need proper care. I earn Rs 45,000 every month. Dairy has given me self satisfaction and a scope of earning," she added. She said that the state government's women empowerment efforts through SHGs are yielding results,



Life is life - whether in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference there between a cat or a man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man's own advantage

SRI AUROBINDO



Fresh push for lateral entry of babus likely

ast year, Arvind Panagariya, former vice-chief of the government NITI Aayog, wrote in his book "India Unlimited – Reclaiming the Lost "Glory" that Indian babus suffered from the socialist hangover, which has slowed down the pace of reforms the Modi sarkar wishes to introduce. To support his view, he cited Modi's initiative for lateral entry at the top levels of the bureaucracy. According to Panagariya, babus slowed down the process to the extent that at the very end of his term only nine officers could be inducted from outside

But the government has not given up, yet. It is making another push to induct 30 more private sector specialists into different government departments at the crucial decision-making level of joint secretaries and directors on a contract basis. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) will shortlist the candidates for interviews.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has introduced the mechanism of recruiting fresh talent in the bureaucracy from the private sector during his first tenure. But the first round hasn't been the success that the government was expecting. It could recruit only nine of the 10 domain experts it had selected, and one of them, Arun Goyal, who had joined the Commerce Ministry as joint secretary, put in his papers barely a year later. It appears that far from

changing the system, the lateral entrants are more likely to be subsumed by it. Further, a year after their appointment, the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) had issued a notice to the UPSC after a netition from whistleblower Indian



BABUDOM BYTES Dilip Cherian

Forest Service (IFoS) officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi alleged irregularities in the recruitment of three of the nine lateral entrants by the government.

The government is catching flak already. Some Opposition leaders are calling for the policy to be withdrawn. Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad has threatened to 'gherao' Parliament, calling the government's move a violation of Constitutional rights. Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejaswi Yadav has said that UPSC's lateral recruitment an injustice to the youth.

Will the Modi sarkar overcome the political resistance from outside and from the babus within who may try to defend their turf?

ED and Kerala polls

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has reportedly registered a case against senior officials of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) for alleged FERA violations. But things get blurred around election time when the stakes are high. Questions are being raised about the timing of the probe, with the ruling LDF claiming the ED action as a "political conspiracy" by the BJP which is trying hard to make a dent in the state.

Sources say that ED has served notices to KIIFB CEO Dr KM Abraham. former Chief Secretary of Kerala, and deputy managing director Vikramjit Singh, a serving IPS officer of the Kerala cadre. As it so happens, Chief Minister Pinarayi is chairman of the board. Not surprisingly, therefore, the ruling party has linked the ED action to the forthcoming elections. The LDF leaders have said that the ED moved only after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statements against the Board.

The Centre has denied the allegations. It is being said that ED's investigations discovered that the board earned ₹2,100 crore by issuing bonds for infra projects, but the money was used by cultural, fisheries and tourism departments. Besides, the state government issued the bonds without the Centre's permission, which violated rules.

Politics, or not, the dust will only settle once the state elections are done with.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

Do one thing every day that scares you.

Happiness is not something readymade. It comes from your own

Whatever you are, be a good one.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WORDS**WORTH**

■ Bumf

t's an expressive and pithy word for all the dross that comes in the mail. It's even more appropriate when you know where it comes from. It was originally British English, possibly public school slang, at least according to Barrère and Leland's Dictionary of Slang of 1889. From there it dispersed to other parts of the former British Empire, but it is less well known in the US, I believe. Its source is usually taken to be the much older bum-fodder. Its first recorded appearance is in 1651, in the first volume of Sir Thomas Urquhart's translation of the works of Rabelais. The slang abbreviation bumf originally had a literal sense of toilet paper, but quickly shifted its meaning back to the original. The usual spelling is bumf but bumph is not unknown.

Bunny rabbit

Bun was an English dialect word, recorded from the sixteenth century, which was used for a squirrel or rabbit. It seems that the word turned into the endearment bunny in the following century, and only later was it transferred back to the rabbit. There is a suggestion that the word may have originally referred to the small tail of the rabbit, in the same way that a tight coil of hair at the back of the neck was also called a bun, because both were roughly the shape and size of the cake. Others argue that the origin was the Gaelic word bun that meant a stump or root, and which could refer to the

Three women are about to be executed for crimes. One's a brunette, one's a redhead, and one's a blonde. Two guards brings the brunette forward, and the executioner asks if she has any last requests. She says no, and the executioner shouts, "Ready . . . Aim . . . ! Suddenly the brunette yells, "Earthquake!!'

Everyone is startled and looks around. She manages to escape.

The angry guards then bring the redhead forward, and the executioner asks if she has any last requests.



Yet again, everyone is startled and looks around. She too escapes execution. By this point, the blonde has figured out what the others did. The guards bring her forward, and the

executioner asks if she has any last

requests. She also says no, and the executioner shouts, Ready . . . Aim . . . ' The blonde shouts, "fire!!"

FOCUS AFRICA

WESTERN SAHARA TIME BOMB



Ana Palacio

THE WESTERN SAHARA DISPUTE HAS LONG BEEN MUDDIED BY CONFLICTING PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS. WHILE THE **POLISARIO HAVE WORKED HARD** TO SHAPE INTERNATIONAL **PUBLIC OPINION** IN THEIR FAVOR, **MOROCCO HAS REMAINED LARGELY SILENT**

n February 27, the Polisario Front marked the 45th anniversary of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which it declared in 1976 to be the rightful government of the territory of Western Sahara. During the celebration - which took place in the refugee camps of Tindouf, in the Algerian desert, where the seat of the SADR government is located - the Polisario decried the continuing political impasse over the territory, which Morocco also claims. The deadlock must be broken – and the European Union should heln

The EU's connections to Western Sahara are extensive. Beyond their geographical proximity, Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony with deeply rooted and often personal ties to Spain. For the thousands of Spaniards who have shared their homes with young Sahrawis summer after summer. the issue of Western Sahara is a heartbreaking family affair.

After Morocco took control of Western Sahara, the Sahrawis faced mass displacement, and many now languish in desert camps, with few options but to depend on humanitarian aid. Now, they may be about to become even more vulnerable. Although Western Sahara has been in limbo for decades, a series of recent developments raises the specter of a new wave of violence, which could hurt the Sahrawis above all.

Last November, the Polisario declared null and void the 1991 United Nations-backed ceasefire that ended a 16-year-long insurgency, leaving the SADR in control of about 20% of the territory and Morocco holding the rest. The Polisario cited Morocco's deployment of troops in a UN-patrolled buffer zone to reopen an important road linking Moroccan-controlled areas of Western Sahara and neighboring Mauritania. The Front had blocked the road a month earlier, arguing that, because it did not exist at the time of the truce, it was illegal.

Morocco says it continues to support the ceasefire. But it also announced that it would resume



US President Joe Biden has said that he wants to relaunch negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front, in order to resolve the long-running Western Sahara dispute. Given Europe's deep ties to the territory, the EU should take a leading role in this initiative

military operations in the buffer

A few weeks later. then-US President Donald Trump strengthened Morocco's position, when he announced by tweet that the United States would recognise its sovereignty over Western Sahara, in exchange for Morocco's normalisation of ties with Israel. The US is not alone in backing Morocco in the Western Sahara dispute: at the end of 2020, 18 Sub-Saharan and Gulf countries had opened, or expressed their intent to open, consulates in Western Sahara, implying a tacit recognition of Moroccan sovereignty.

But the Polisario Front also has plenty of supporters, including Germany which criticised Trump's action. This, together with its decision earlier last year not to invite Morocco to a conference it had organized aimed at addressing the conflict in Libya, apparently motivated Morocco's recent decision to suspend all contact with the German embassy in Rabat.

The Western Sahara dispute has long been muddied by conflicting public perceptions. While the Polisario have worked hard to shape international public opinion in their favor, Morocco has remained largely silent. This is not because Morocco is less committed to the cause. Rather, the country's leaders have nothing to discuss: Western Sahara is part of their sovereign territory. End of story.

But Morocco's quietly resolute approach has left room for the Polisario to pursue a wily policy of judicialization, using courts and legal mechanisms to shape answers to thorny moral and public-policy questions. For example, the Polisario Front recently challenged (unsuccessfully) the legality of agricultural exports and fisheries agreements between Morocco and the EU before the European Court of Justice, arguing that Morocco is plundering the resources of a territory that doesn't belong to it.

Such efforts to apply economic pressure on Morocco overwhelmingly harm the Sahrawis, whom the Polisario Front purports to be protecting. In fact, the Sahrawis have been taken hostage by the Polisario in order to sustain the narrative that Morocco is an occupier. It is a narrative that is not borne

out by international law. The law of occupation - a body of international humanitarian law – is not applicable. Of the 47 UN General Assembly resolutions on Western Sahara adopted since 1975, occupation was mentioned in only two - in 1979 and 1980 - both of which were highly controversial. None of the 69 Security Council resolutions on Western Sahara makes any reference to occupation.

What those resolutions do instead is exhort the parties – in mind-numbingly repetitive terms to negotiate a political settlement, whether in the form of a straightforward independence referendum, as the Polisario demands. or an agreement to establish Western Sahara as an autonomous region, as Morocco has proposed. To that end, the Security Council has repeatedly extended the mandate of the UN Mission for the Organization of a Referendum in Western Sahara.

The Polisario Front says the UN hasn't done enough to deliver the referendum. UN-led negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario, with Algeria and Mauritania as observers, have been suspended since early 2019.

The status quo in Western Sahara - and the Maghreb more broadly – is not sustainable. Warfare, should it return, would fuel political instability across the region. Fortunately, US President Joe Biden has publicly committed his administration to the relaunch of negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario. (He does not seem likely to reverse Trump's recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, as Europe had hoped.)

The EU should take a leading role in this initiative. Europe's connections to Western Sahara and the EU's core values - demand nothing less.

The writer, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain and former senior vicepresident and general counsel of the World Bank Group, is a visiting lecturer at Georgetown University.

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SPECTRUM ENVIRONMENT

Unleashing the climate market

Nancy Birdsall & Brian Webster

PROGRESS AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE HAS LONG CREPT AT A SNAIL'S PACE, AND THE COSTS OF INACTION ARE INCREASINGLY CLEAR TO SEE

rogress against climate change has long crept at a snail's pace, and the costs of inaction are increasingly clear to see. Hardly a week goes by without a natural disaster or an extreme weather event that destroys the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable populations in the developing world. Among the latest horrors is a devastating flood in India, owing to glacial melt, and the wave of Category 4 hurricanes that struck Honduras in November.

With a per capita carbon footprint that is 4-5 times larger than the average low-or middle-income country, the United States is deeply implicated in these tragedies. Fortunately 2021 is shaping up to be a year when meaningful US climate action finally takes off, owing to a groundswell in the global financial industry. That's right: Big Finance has started to go green as major institutional investors seek out safe. long-run returns in global markets.

Among many other positive developments, ExxonMobil, under pressure from Blackrock, the world's largest asset manager, recently wrote down some \$20 billion of its fossil-fuel assets. The New York State Common Retirement fund,

with more than \$200 billion under management, has announced that it will divest from fossil-fuel firms. And, as The Economist recently noted, energy firms' share of the S&P 500 has fallen from 10% in 2011 to 3% today, reflecting not just the effects of the pandemic but also investor "gripes beyond COVID-19." Insurance markets are aban-

doning fossil fuels. Already in 2019, insurers accounting for 37% of the industry's global assets were pulling out of coal investments, having deemed the industry increasingly "uninsurable." And this past December, Lloyd's, the world's biggest insurance market, announced that it will stop issuing new coverage for coal and other dirty energy projects within a year.

Finally, in the auto industry, electric vehicles (EVs) are gaining momentum. For example, BMW recently announced that it will build 250,000 more EVs over the next two years than it had originally planned.

Although there are still plenty of divides between industry leaders and regulators, the historic resistance to stronger climate standards is melting, and many in the private sector are expressing a willingness to work with US President Joe Biden's administration. Where did this wave of finan-

cial greening originate? Some of the credit should certainly go to the journalist and climate activist Bill McKibben, the co-founder of 350.org. McKibben got the ball rolling years ago by calling on university students to push their schools' endowment funds to divest from fossil fuels. This approach took time, but as the costs of producing clean energy fell, and as the ESG (environment, social, and governance) investment movement gained steam, it became easier for university boards to reconcile student demands with respectable market returns.

Where McKibben has been building up the grassroots, former Bank of England Governor Mark Carney has emerged as a key thinker on the policy front. In 2015, when he was still at the BOE, he pressed financial regulators to encourage firms to publish data on the carbon intensity of their assets, arguing that such information would generate demand for even more disclosures and ultimately build resilience into the market. Now, the UK and the European Union are both implementing their own climate-reporting

requirements for firms. And in the US, Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen is considering a series of climate-risk stress tests for major financial institutions.

Of course, financial markets ultimately respond to expected prices and returns, which are significantly influenced by public policies (such as green-energy subsidies and fuelefficiency standards). And public policies, in turn, should reflect public attitudes. It is therefore simplistic to say that the financial industry is going green on its own. According to YouGov, climate change is now a top issue for US voters (just behind health care and the economy), after ranking low on the priority list just five years ago.

The stars are aligning for 2021 to be a year of significant action on climate change. A comprehensive push by the SEC would bend the curve even more profoundly toward a more sustainable future.

Nancy Birdsall is President Emeritus and a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development. Brian Webster is a research assistant at the Center for Global Development.

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

Crony capitalism

Sir, After 1991, when globalisation policy was implemented, Indian economy started depending on crony capitalism. Floodgate of privatisation process opened in the name of development of economy. Through that process, the government handed over all government institutions to the private owners at less than the real price and relied entirely on the private owners. Now a nexus between the government and the politicians have been formed called crony. Crony capitalism is an indicator of the state of the economy where success in business is determined by the mutual relationship between businessmen and government officials. There are four factors of production in all these systems namely; land, labour, capital, and the entrepreneur. It is worth mentioning that the success of the entrepreneur depends on the political support of the government of the concerned country. As soon as we are having more economic and technical development, the income disparity is increasing day by day. Since it is the bond between the business owner and the government, the huge amount of expenses incurred during the elections is paid by the business owners to the party that benefits them. So when the party comes to power, they give all kinds of rebates to the capitalists, so that the money they have to spend on the general public makes them happy, but the consequences are very dangerous, which we see in our daily lives. Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Horses for courses

Sir; Assembly elections are on the cards in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala and Pondicherry. We are witnessing a tough fight during summer heat and the emerging second wave of COVID-19. TMC supremo is playing a foot injury in Nandigram to seal the seat first for her and the party in general. In Pondicherry, NDA is holding the trump card with NR Congress as the main partner. In Kerala, the recent opinion polls released by two different firms show that LDF is ahead, however, UDF has covered much ground and the election result might be very close. In Tamil Nadu, the fight is nect-to-neck between AIADMK and its arch rival DMK. In Assam, the Opposition may be able to chip away at the BJP's victory margins but the saffron party is set to return to power if the survey results are to be believed. Despite all the predictions and opinion poll results it will be a neck-toneck fight everywhere as opinion polls may go wrong in many cases. *CK Subramaniam*, MUMBAI



TWO STATES



OrissaPOST

SATURDAY | MARCH 13 | 2021 | BHUBANESWAR

MAHARASHTRA

COVID-19 surge due

The state recorded over 15,000 fresh infection cases,

which is the highest so far in 2021

to polls, disregard

for rules: Experts

Mamata's soft Hindutva vs Suvendu's aggressive Hindutva

Muslim population, which has stood

solidly behind the TMC over the

last decade. Adhikari is eyeing the

majority of the rest 70 per cent, escalating the fight for Hindu votes.

tion rallies that he has complete

faith in the "70 per cent electorate

and is not worried about the rest 30

per cent". Although senior TMC

leaders insisted that her visit to

temples was part of the party's "in-

Adhikari has often told his elec-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nandigram, March 12: "I am a daughter of a Hindu family", asserted Mamata Banerjee and went on to recite 'Chandi Path', an ode to Goddess Durga, as she treaded the path of "soft Hindutva" to court the majority Hindus in communally cleaved Nandigram Wednesday.

By the time she got immobilised and confined to a hospital bed in Kolkata following a mishap at the hustings which the TMC alleged was a conspiracy to "take her life" and the BJP a "well-scripted drama", the TMC boss had visited 12 temples in two days.

Nandigram, which first grabbed national headlines in the mid-2000s because of the anti-land acquisition agitation led by Banerjee, is back in news again after the West Bengal chief minister decided to take on her former protégé Suvendu Adhikari, who joined the BJP in December, on his home turf.

Banerjee visited 12 temples and a mazaar, Islamic mausoleum, during her campaign in Nandigram this week which had to be cut short after she got injured

Adhikari, who claimed Banerjee recited the 'Chandi Path' incorrectly, called the TMC supremo an "adulterated Hindu who cannot

BATTLE FOR NANDIGRAM NANDIGRAM IS BACK IN NEWS AGAIN MINISTER DECIDED TO TAKE ON HER FORMER PROTÉGÉ SUVENDU ADHIKARI, WHO JOINED THE BJP IN DECEMBER ON Mamata Banerjee

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Suvendu Adhikari In

wash away the sins of appeasement politics"

Banerjee's temple-hopping and chanting shlokas at an election rally are being seen as an effort to counter the BJP's strong Hindutva push, as also an attempt to blunt the criticism over her alleged Muslim bias. "Don't play the Hindu card with me," she declared at the rally Tuesday.

Nandigram has over 30 per cent

mausoleum, during her campaign in Nandigram this

mazaar, Islamic to be cut short after she got

population, which has stood solidly behind the TMC. Adhikari is eyeing the majority of the rest 70 per cent, escalating the fight for Hindu votes

Nandigram has

over 30 per cent

clusive policies", rival BJP said it was aimed at denting the saffron party's burgeoning Hindu support base as she had realised that only the Muslim votes were not sufficient to see her through.

AFTER THE WEST BENGAL CHIEF

HIS HOME TURF

visited 12

temples and a

"We don't believe in communal politics, unlike the BJP. Suvendu is a traitor and has forgotten all the ideals that he had learnt in the Congress and TMC. That is why he is trying to make it a fight between the Hindus and Muslims. We have no religious agenda," senior TMC MP Saugato Roy told this news agency. Hitting back, Adhikari questioned the need for the Chief Minister to visit so many temples.

"She decided to contest from the seat due to the 30 per cent population of a specific community. You see the leaders who are moving around with her in Nandigram and you will understand," he said

"I am a Hindu, and I don't want to divide communities. It is the TMC which is trying to drive a wedge between them with its appeasement politics," Adhikari added.

A senior TMC leader in the district conceded that only the Muslim votes can't ensure the party's victory in the seat. "If Suvendu manages to consolidate Hindu votes given the communally charged atmosphere in Nandigram, things might get difficult (for TMC)," he said.

According to TMC sources, the soft Hindutva push by the TMC may be a new thing in Nandigram, but it has been the party's strategy following the electoral reverses in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The party's decision to organise 'Brahmin Sammelan', give allowances to Sanatan Brahmins and extend financial assistance to Durga Puja committees were all part of that carefully planned

rity personnel around me."

Accordingly, the Trinamool

Congress leadership accused the

BJP and the Election Commission

(EC) for the incident. It also pointed

fingers at the role of the poll panel

as it had removed the state Director

General of Police without con-

Interestingly, within 24-hours,

Banerjee released a video where

she deliberately bypassed the 'con-

spiracy' theory completely, and said

"It is true that I got badly hurt yes

terday. I got a leg injury, a bone in-

jury and in the ligament... I had

pain in my head and chest as a re-

sult of the injury... I was greeting peo-

ple from the car bonnet and a huge

bush came... and the car crushed my

chief never mentioned the 'con-

spiracy' theory again on Thursday.

Quite surprisingly, the Trinamool

foot," she said in the video.

sulting the state government.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai. March 12: Maharashtra has been recording a substantial rise in coronavirus cases of late, with the authorities attributing it to crowding witnessed during the grampanchayat elections held mid-January this year and a widespread disregard for the norms by common

people as well as politicians. The state Friday recorded over 15,000 fresh infection cases, which is not only the highest so far in 2021, but also since October 7 last year. The overall case count till Thursday night was 22,66,374.

Not only Mumbai, Pune and Thane, but several cities and towns in Maharashtra, including Vidarbha and Marathwada regions, have been witnessing spike in cases. Lockdown or restrictions have been imposed in several cities or districts in the state in a bid to prevent the spread of the virus.

On February 21, Maharashtra had crossed the 21 lakh- mark of COVID-19 cases. Exactly a month before that (January 21), there were 20,00,878 cases in the state and it took only a month to add another one lakh cases after that.

However, another one lakh case were added in merely 13 days (after February 21), which shows the increased speed of the infection spread. On March 6, the state's case-

load reached 22,08,586 and in the last six days (till Thursday evening), the state added 57,788 cases to the tally.

Dr Subhash Salunke, advisor to the Maharashtra government on COVID-19 management, said, "There of people and contact tracing. These are the two basic but the most important tools of curbing the coronavirus spread.'

The earlier you trace and isolate an infected person, the sooner you can bring the situation under control, he said The most prominent reason be-

hind the surge in COVID-19 cases in February was crowding witnessed during when grampanchyat elections held mid-January, he said. "Results of the grampanchayat

elections in almost 12,000 villages were out in the third week of January After that, the winning panels and their supporters gathered in their respective villages without wearing masks and ignoring physical distancing," Salunke said.

As the incubation period of coronavirus is 14 days, Maharashtra started detecting more number of cases from mid-February, he added.

A Mumbai-based political observer said, "Look at the political" rallies and gatherings that have taken place in January and February by ruling parties in the state, including after Nana Patole's appointment as Congress's Maharashtra unit chief.'

Patole not only organised a huge rally in Mumbai, but also visited several places including Nagpur later where his party workers and supporters ignored norms of wearing masks, physical distancing and

others, he said. The show of strength by the then state forest minister Sanjay Rathod in Washim and Yavatmal districts late last month was similar. Patole and Rathod could have avoided such large-scale crowding, but

State BJP spokesperson Keshav Upadhya said, "As these events were public and widely televised it gave a wrong message to the society and many private groups also flouted COVID-19 norms.'

they did not bother at all, he said.

Mumbaikars worried over possibility of another lockdown

Mumbai, March 12: With the Centre saving that the Covid-19

surge cannot be taken lightly and the state of Maharashtra indicat ing strong restrictions in the days ahead, a scenario of lockdown has got the common man worried. Amruta Kadam (name changed)

from Chembur, who runs a beauty parlour, says that she cannot afford a lockdown like 2020. "I paid rent for eight months for this place even though it was closed. My staff is dependent on the parlour. I paid them half salary throughout even as there were no earrings. There is no one ready to help us with capital. Now slowly we are trying to get back to our feet as the wedding season has given us some work But if there is another lockdown like last year I will have to shut down this place. I myself don't know what I will be doing if that happens.'

Rohit Kumar, who hails from UP and works as a private driver in Mumbai, says he's been tracking news bulletins to find out whether there will be a full lockdown or partial lockdown. "There will be a huge problem if a lockdown is imposed again. My family of five mem-



bers is dependent on me.

Rajesh from Patna who has a bhelpuri counter in South Mumbai says that he isn't even thinking of lockdown scenario. "There has been no income this year. The customers aren't coming as they used to earlier. May be they are hesitant.

But business isn't the same as it was earlier. Lockdown will mean again wait for things to improve. What else can I say! If one has to earn money then he has to go out and work. Let's see what happens.

Doctor Lancelot Pinto consultant Pulmonologist, PD Hinduja Hospital and MRC said if hotspots have been clearly identified, limited lockdowns, especially prohibiting gathering of individuals at places such as restaurants, events, gyms, and marketplaces may have to be considered as circuit breakers, in tandem with ramping up of contact tracing, testing and vaccination.

From 'conspiracy' to 'hurt', Mamata does U-turn over Nandigram incident

WITHIN 24-HOURS FROM THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT, THE **TRINAMOOL CONGRESS SUPREMO RELEASED A TWO-MINUTE VIDEO CLIP IN WHICH SHE SAID THAT SHE GOT BADLY 'HURT'**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 12: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had alleged Wednesday that the incident, in which she had received leg injuries in East Midnapore's Nandigram while campaigning, was a 'conspiracy'.

Within 24-hours from the time of the incident, the Trinamool Congress supremo released a twominute video clip in which she said that she got badly 'hurt'.

The mismatching statements of the West Bengal CM sparked off a



ragging debate ahead of the high-

After the incident, Banerjee had claimed it was a conspiracy. "There were about four five men who did it... See how it is swelling up," she had said while pointing to her legs. She had also said, "Of course it is

Trinamool Congress is facing a

a conspiracy. There were no secu-

octane state Assembly elections, at a time when the incumbent stiff challenge from its arch-rival Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in

Meanwhile, the EC responded to Trinamool Congress' letter over the Nandigram incident in which Banerjee was injured. As per sources, the EC said in the communication: "The incident was quite unfortunate. It is also full of insinuations and averments.

she got 'hurt'.

Fighting discrimination in India, one purse at a time

"Chamar Studio" owes its name, derived from the Sanskrit word for 'skin' and long used locally as a slur, to leather craftsmen who lie at the bottom of the caste hierarchy

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Mumbai, March 12: The sound of men punching holes into colourful rubber sheets reverberates across a tiny studio in India's largest slum - an unlikely birthplace for luxury handbags made by a marginalised community seeking to reclaim its

"Chamar Studio" owes its name, derived from the Sanskrit word for 'skin' and long used locally as a slur, to leather craftsmen who lie at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. As members of the Dalit caste, formerly known as untouchables, life has always been a struggle for leather workers, who are largely Hindu Chamars or Muslim.

Then came Prime Minister Narendra Modi's war on beef consumption, which destroyed their livelihoods by cutting off access to raw materials. It also raised the threat of lynchings by so-called cow vigilantes - Hindu hardliners fighting to protect the animal they deem sacred.

"Chamars have been oppressed for so long," the brand's founder Sudheer Rajbhar told this news

An artist by training, Rajbhar who is lower-caste though not Chamar - sought to offer the community a new lease on life by designing minimalist handbags made of recycled rubber - a sustainable substitute for leather. But first he had to weigh the

legal risks, after India's Supreme Court banned the "highly offensive word" in 2008 over its widespread use as a term of abuse.



Artisans stitch new recycled rubber bags for 'Chamar Studio' at a workshop inside Dharavi slum in Mumbai AFP PHOTO

Then he had to convince the community, with many craftsmen fearing the potentially incendiary - and loss-making - implications of marketing a luxury product with lowercaste associations

"I thought it was such a weird name for a brand," said Rahul Gore, who faced discrimination while growing up in a village 300 kilometres from Mumbai.

'We were allowed to play with upper-caste children but their parents would not allow us to visit them at home or share food. I used to feel very bad about it," Gore, now 35, said.

The use of rubber instead of leather meant that virtually every step - from the cutting to the stitching - needed to be performed by hand rather than with sewing

The absence of tanning and the use of organic colours to dye the bags in the brand's signature hues of cobalt blue, red and emerald green make the process much less toxic for workers, said Mr Rajbhar.

The purses are so durable they can even withstand a spin in a washing machine, he added.

Rajbhar used his savings and bank loans to invest around Rs 1 million (S\$18,459) into launching the brand in 2017, turning to local cobbler Sachin Sakhare for help in training craftsmen.

Sakhare started working on Mumbai's crowded pavements as a 13-year-old when his father, also a cobbler, was killed in a hit-and-run accident. He said he wanted to "improve the lot of my people". "The caste system has created

just don't respect certain types of work," said Sakhare, who used to earn Rs 400 a day as a cobbler.

so much discrimination that people

The father-of-two now leads a team of Chamar and Muslim craftsmen making unisex totes, shoulder bags and clutches, and says his

sense of self-worth has expanded. "Now that I get more respect (for my work), I feel more like an artist", he added.

"It feels really good to tell the $\overline{}$ world that we are Chamar and we



People pay tribute to victims of 1993 Bombay bombings at Century Bazar, one of the 12 attack sites, on the 28th anniversary of the serial blasts, in Mumbai, Friday

CBI SUMMONS ABHISHEK'S IN-LAWS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 12: CBI has now summoned TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee's sister-in-law Maneka's husband and father-in-law for questioning March 15 at its Kolkata office in connection with the coal smuggling probe.

Pawan and Ankush Arora have been summoned by the CBI. The relatives of Abhishek Banerjee, who is Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's nephew, have been asked to appear before the Kolkata unit of CBI.

Ankush Arora is Maneka

COAL **SMUGGLING CASE**

Gambhir's husband and Pawan is her father-in-law. Maneka is Abhishek Banerjee's sister-in-law. CBI had recently questioned

Abhishek Banerjee's wife Rujira and sister-in-law Menaka Gambhir in the case pertaining to illegal coal mining and smuggling from the mines of the Eastern Coalfields

Abhishek Banerjee, the Lok

Sabha MP from the Diamond Harbour constituency and the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, wields considerable influence in the party and has been leading the TMC's counter-attack in the run-up to the Assembly polls. West Bengal is set to witness an

eight-phase assembly election starting March 27 and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is leading a vigorous campaign in the state to oust the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), which had secured consecutive electoral wins in 2011 and 2016 under its leader Mamata Banerjee.

national



Narendra Modi is himself flagging off Dandi March from the Sabarmati Ashram to commemorate this day. I hope that Gandhiji's message would shake his conscience and he would take a decision on farm laws by the evening

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

KAMAL HAASAN TO CONTEST FROM COIMBATORE SOUTH

Actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan would make his electoral debut, contesting from **Coimbatore South constituency** in the April 6 Tamil Nadu assembly elections





supporting any party or telling people whom to vote for but our only appeal is that the BJP should be



YOGENDRA YADAV SAMYUKTA KISAN MORCHA LEADER

First Stalin and now Udhayanidhi Two years ago Stalin said none from his family will enter politics. But he has forgotten all that, is misleading people and Stalin and those belonging to Karunanidhi's family are doing dynasty politics today

K PALANISWAMI TAMIL NADU CM

Why are they opposing the installation of 500 flag masts across Delhi? If not be unfurled in

in India, will our flag Pakistan, if not in Delhi, will it be unfurled in Islamabad

ARVIND KEJRIWAL DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Cheating case against Kangana

Mumbai: A case of alleged cheating was filed against actor Kangana Ranaut by Mumbai police on Friday on a local court's orders after the author of 'Didda: The Warrior Queen of Kashmir' accused her of copyright violation. The First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Khar police station against Kangana, Kamalkumar Jain, Rangoli Chandel and Akshat Ranaut, an official said.

Delhi breathes foul air

New Delhi: The national capital on Friday recorded the air quality index in the 'poor' category due to dust, but the Ministry of Earth Sciences said that expected rainfall is expected to lower it down. "Thunderstorms with gusty winds and local dust lifting are likely at isolated places today, Expected rainfall is likely to contribute to AQI positively through wet deposition," according to Ministry's System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research.

Man fires shots to scare ex-gf

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have arrested a man for firing in West Delhi's Subhash Nagar to frighten his ex-girlfriend. The girl had come to her friend's house Wednesday evening when the accused Suresh Kadvan, 32, followed her and fired shots outside the house, police said Friday.

Rave party busted

Hyderabad: In a major operation undertaken early Friday, Rachakonda Commissionerate police have detained 90 youngsters from a rave party organised at a farm house near the city. The detained youngsters include techies, college students, and also two women, who had purchased tickets for the event.

Terrorist arrested

Jammu: Security forces arrested a terrorist and seized arms and ammunition from a house in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district Friday, officials said. A joint cordon and search operation was launched by the Army, the CRPF, the SSB and the JK-Police in Bikheryan village, they said. During the operation, a terrorist, identified as Firdous Ahmed, was apprehended from the house of Ghulam Ahmed Natnoo and three Chinese pistols, two magazines, 15 rounds and a silencer were recovered from there, the officials said.

Two-foot-tall man seeks police help to find a bride

Azim, 26 claimed that his family was not sincere about his marriage

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Muzaffarnagar (UP), March 12: Police in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district has received an unusual request -- to find a bride for a two-foot-tall man. Azim, 26, had Tuesday ap-

proached the women police station in Shamli, claiming that his family members were not marrying him and requested the police to find a match for him. However, he had no success. Station House Officer of the police station Niraj Choudhry said police have no role to arrange marriages for people.

We can help if there is a dispute between couples but to find a bride for a man is not our job, she said. Azim's family, who live in Kairana, said they



want him to get married but someone should be willing to marry him.

He is physically weak and has got problems with his hands. We want him to be married to a person who can take care of him, Azim's brother Mohammad Naeem said. We have got many proposals including one from Moradabad and we are planning to travel there to see the woman, he

India, China hold in-depth talks

New Delhi, March 12: India and China Friday held "in-depth" discussions on addressing the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, holding that disengagement in the North and South banks of Pangong lake provided a good basis to work towards their early res-

The two countries also agreed during the parleys that in the interim they should continue to maintain stability at ground level and prevent any untoward incident. The talks were held under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC).

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two sides agreed to maintain close communication and dialogue through both the diplomatic and military channels and agreed to convene the 11th round of military talks at an early date.

In a statement, it said the two sides should continue their dialogue to reach a mutually acceptable and China agreed that the agreement reached between the two foreign

solution for complete disengagement from all friction points at the earliest. "This would enable two sides to look at broader de-escalation of troops in the area and work towards restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas. They also agreed that in the interim two sides should continue to maintain stability at ground level and prevent any untoward inci-

The MEA also said that India

South Bank of the Pangong Lake provided a good basis for the two sides to work towards early resolution of these remaining issues. The Indian delegation was led

by Additional Secretary (East Asia) in the MEA while the Chinese side was headed by director general of the boundary and oceanic department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two countries had completed withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in line with an agreement on disengagement. After completion of the disengagement process in Pangong lake areas, senior military commanders of India and China held another round of talks on February 20 with a focus on taking forward the disengagement process in other friction points.

At the talks, India pitched for a faster disengagement process in areas like Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang to bring down tension in the mountainous region.

ministers in Moscow in September last as also their recent phone conversation in February should continue to guide the work of the two sides. "The two sides reviewed the situation along the LAC in the Western sector and had in-depth discussions on the remaining issues along the LAC in the Western dent," the MEA added sector," it said.

"They agreed that the completion

Officials associated **FOR A GOOD HEALTH** with govts can't



CBI, ED issue summons to TMC leaders, ex-MPs

THE CBI HAD TAKEN OVER THE INVESTIGATION OF SARADHA AND OTHER PONZI SCAM

CASES ON THE ORDERS OF THE SUPREME COURT MAY 9, 2014

PONZI SCAM CASES

Cyclists silhouetted against a cloudy sky on Chandigarh-Bathinda road during early morning hours, in Patiala

CENTRAL BUREAU

The economic offences wing of

the CBI asked him to depose be-

fore its sleuths by next week at the

CGO Complex office of the agency

The ED probing the money laun-

in Kolkata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

as state election commissioners (SECs) and came down on the Goa government for giving its Law Secretary the additional charge of The apex court said the state poll panels shall be headed by independent persons who do not hold any office under the state govern-

New Delhi, March 12: In a sig-

nificant verdict, the Supreme Court

Friday held that a person employed

with the government cannot work

fore taking charge of SEC. The top court said election commissioners have to be independent persons and no state can appoint a person who holds any office with

ment and if they hold any such of-

fices, then they have to resign be-

the government. A bench headed by Justice R F Nariman also directed the Goa date, it is the duty of the state to not interfere with the functioning of the state election commission," the bench held in its judgement delivered on the appeal of the state government. The judgement came on an appeal by the Goa government against the high court's ruling on panchayat polls. The case pertained

tification for the local body polls

within 10 days from today and com-

plete the election process by April

30. "Under the Constitutional man-

which reservation of wards for woman and Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes were allegedly not carried out in terms of state law The Bombay High Court had

to local body elections in Goa in

struck down the notice of state poll panel for reservation of wards. The Goa government, in its appeal, had said that High Court could not have interfered with the state election body to issue the nopoll process.

Haryana govt presents

work as SECs: SC

Chandigarh, March 12: Identifying health, agriculture and infrastructure as key priority areas, the Haryana government Friday presented a Rs 1.55 lakh crore-budget for the next fiscal and stayed away

From proposing free education for class 9 to 12 students from all categories to setting up Special Education Zones (SEZs) to promoting technology-based learning in government schools, the budget has renewed focus on the state's education sector.

Presenting his second budget, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also announced a new scheme - Mukhyamantri Antyodya Parivar Utthan Abhiyan -- to help the poorest families as well as an increase in old-age pension to Rs 2,500 from Rs 2,250 per month, ef-

fective from April 1.

₹1.55 lakh cr budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

from imposing fresh taxes.

"It is important for the budget to prioritise specific sectors that are key to leverage a rebound in the economy, particularly in times of crisis. We have identified health, agriculture and infrastructure as key priority areas that we need to focus recovery and resurgence,' he said. "While focusing on health

is of paramount importance in these times of unprecedented public health crisis, agriculture which forms the foundation of our economy and which is the sheet anchor of our self-reliance is critical," he emphasised.

Google to help people find vaccination centres

bail in September 2016.

Chatterjee, the state's parlia-

mentary affairs, school education

and higher education minister said

that he has not received any such

communication from the CBI so

I can be present at any public meet-

ing by virtue of being a minister.

Please remember that I left a highly

lucrative job to join politics and I

have no greed for money," he told re-

porters. Chatteriee used to work

in diversified PSU Andrew Yule

Like Saradha and Rose Valley

chit fund companies, I-core raised

money from the public by several

The CBI had taken over the in-

vestigation of Saradha and other

ponzi scam cases on the orders of

the Supreme Court May 9, 2014.

fraudulent schemes floated by it.

before joining politics.

"If I am called, I will definitely go.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

the agencies said.

Kolkata, March 12: The Central

Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and

the Enforcement Directorate (ED)

on Friday issued summons to

Trinamool Congress leaders Partha

Chatterjee and Madan Mitra re-

spectively in connection with sep-

arate ponzi scam cases, sources in

TMC Rajya Sabha members busi-

nessman Swapan Sadhan Bose and

journalist Ahmed Hassan Imran -

in connection with a case. Chatterjee,

TMC secretary general and senior

West Bengal minister, was allegedly

seen in some of the public func-

tions arranged by the now-defunct

I-core chit fund company which

was charged with duping investors

by offering them abnormally high

returns on investments.

The ED also summoned former

New Delhi, March 12: Google Friday said it will start showing information related to vaccination centres on its various platforms like search, maps and Google Assistant.

Google, in a blogpost, said its teams have been working on surfacing "authoritative and timely information" for people asking vac-

cine-related questions. 'We have worked with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to amplify this science-based narrative around vaccination drive, and have been working closely with the Rapid Risk

Response team at the MoHFW that is tracking misinformation using social media listening tools across region and languages, and countering it with science-based messaging on vaccines and pandemic response overall," it said.

Shortly after the first phase of and eight Indian languages (Tamil,

vaccinations commenced, Google had rolled out knowledge panels in Google Search that show up for queries relating to the COVID vaccine. This was done to help people find credible information as these panels provided consolidated information such as details on the two vaccines, effectiveness, safety, distribution, side effects, among others and is available in English



Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, and

Saradha scam asked Imran, Bose

and Mitra to depose before its offi-

cials on March 17, 18 and 19 re-

spectively, sources said. Mitra was

earlier arrested by the CBI in a

Saradha scam case and was in jail

for 21 months. He was released on

This information is sourced from MoHFW, and provides answers to commonly asked questions, displays real-time statistics around vaccinations completed, and provides links to the MoHFW website for additional local resources, Google

'With vaccinations for the vulnerable population having commenced from 1st March in thousands of hospitals across the country, we are also working with the MoHFW and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accurately surface the information on vaccination centers on Google Search, Maps and Google Assistant, and expect to roll this out in the coming weeks,' Google said.

Google also delivers regular Google Trends reports on COVID vaccine queries that reflect interest around the vaccination from month to month across regions to help government officials as they make critical decisions during these vaccination rollouts, the blogpost said.

"As COVID-19 continues to challenge our communities, we remain committed to doing all we can to assist the country's health agencies at this key juncture of the pandemic, where the successful rollout of these large-scale vaccinations can help us collectively turn a corner and see a much-needed return to normalcy,"

More than 2.61 crore (2,61,64,920) vaccine doses have been administered through 4,87,919 sessions, asper the provisional report till Friday 7 am.

national



BJP's patriotism is just a slogan and we do not need it. People need development and not 'fake Deshbhakti' of the

MANISH SISODIA **DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER**

'BHARAT RATNA FOR PINGALI'

Within hours of meeting the family members of Indian flag designer Pingali Venkaiah Friday, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy wrote to PM Narendra Modi recommending a Bharat Ratna to be awarded to him posthumously





government of India has allocated 2,500 km roads for widening and strengthening in Harvana under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yoiana, Phase-III

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

Rajyogini Dadi Hridav Mohini devoted her life in the pursuit of intense spiritual endeavour, soul consciousness.

spiritual attainment, meditation and to spread the positive message of the Brahma Kumaris' family

BISWA BHUSAN HARICHANDAN ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNOR



unfortunate. I wish her a speedy

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Four held for stealing mobiles

Gurugram: The Gurugram police have arrested four men, including a company truck driver, for allegedly stealing 53 smartphones worth Rs 19 lakh from a leading e-commerce company's truck, the police said Friday. The accused were identified as Kaishav Kumar, Kapil Kumar, Lokesh of Aligarh district in Uttar Pradesh and Amit Kumar of Badaun district in UP.

Prez appoints K'taka HC judge

New Delhi: President Ram Nath Kovind Friday appointed Mohammed Ghouse Shukure Kamal as an Additional Judge of the Karnataka High Court, an official statement said. According to the Ministry of Law and Justice statement, Kamal has practiced for more than 23 years in the Karnataka High Court and subordinate courts at Bengaluru in civil, criminal, constitutional, labour, arbitration, revenue and Wagf matters.

NSUI holds protest

New Delhi: The Congress party's student wing, National Student Union of India (NSUI), organised the "Chhatra Adhikar March' Friday to protest against rising unemployment in the country. Thousands of students and party workers from Puniab, Harvana, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh gathered at the NSUI office here before beginning their march towards Parliament building raising slogans like "Naukri Do Ya Degree Wapis Lo" (give us jobs or take our degrees back).

TN ASSEMBLY ELECTION

DMK list out, Stalin to contest from Kolathur



before releasing his partys candidate list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, March 12: DMK president M K Stalin will seek a third term from his Kolathur constituency here for the April 6 Assembly elections while son Udhayanidhi will make his electoral debut this time, as the opposition party is pitted in a direct fight with arch-rival AIADMK in over a 100 seats

Nearly half of the 173 nominees were sitting MLAs representing various constituencies, according to the list released by Stalin at a press conference at DMK headquarters Anna Arivalayam here, on the day the nomination process started. Udhayanidhi will fight from the Chepauk-Triplicane constituency, represented by the late J Anbazhagan who succumbed to COVID-19 last year.

Udhayanidhi, an actor-producer, is a third generation politician from the DMK's first family following the footsteps of his late grandfather and former DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi and father Stalin. Stalin retained 79 sitting MLAs including seniors Durai Murugan, KN Nehru, K Ponmudi, MRK Panneerselvam, P Geetha Jeevan and Poongothai Aladi Aruna- all former ministers, besides legislators such as TRB Raja, Anitha Radhakrishnan, S R Raja, M Subramanian and R Sakkarapani. Stalin said he will file the nomination March 15 and embark on the next leg of the campaign.

Since many of the parties including the Vaiko-led MDMK will be contesting on DMK's Rising Sun symbol, the lead partner will be effectively in fray in 187 seats, he added. DMK has allotted 61 seats to allies, with the Congress taking the lion's share of 25. The DMK, out of power since 2011, is eyeing a comeback by dethroning the ruling AIADMK and has stitched up a rainbow coalition comprising the Congress, the Left, MDMK, VCK and other smaller outfits, apportioning them a total of 61 of the 234 seats at stake.

The party will lock horns in what promises to be an intense political battle with the AIADMK in 122 seats, including that of Chief Minister K Palaniswami's Edapadi and his deputy O Panneerselvam's Bodinayakkanur constituencies. While a relatively lesser known T Sampathkumar will take on the chief minister on his home turf, popular local leader and former AIADMK MLA Thanga Tamilselvan will challenge Panneerselvam, who incidentally filed his nomination Friday. Tamilselvan was one of the 18 AIADMK MLAs disqualified earlier for siding with AMMK leader TTV Dhinakaran before he joined the Stalin-led dispensation. He had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections from Theni on AMMK ticket but lost to Panneerselvam's son OP Rayindranath.

India records over 1L nCoV cases in 6 days

THE NATIONWIDE COVID-19 TALLY HAS REACHED 1,13,08,846, WHILE THE DEATH TOLL **INCREASED TO 1,58,306 WITH 117 DAILY NEW FATALITIES, DATA UPDATED AT 8 AM SHOWED**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: India added over one lakh coronavirus infections in six days with 23,285 cases being reported in a span of 24 hours till Friday morning, the highest in around 78 days, according to the Union Health Ministry's data updated Friday.

The total number of active case rose to 1,97,237, which now comprises 1.74 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery rate has dropped to 96.86 per cent. On December 24, 24,712 new infections were reported in a span of 24 hours. The country has registered 1,16,758 cases in six days.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 1,09,53,303, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.40 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed



the 20-lakh mark August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark December 19.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 22,49,98,638 samples have been tested up to March 11 with 7,40,345 samples being tested Thursday. The 117 new fatalities include 57 from Maharashtra, 18 from Punjab and 13 from Kerala.

A total of 1,58,306 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 52,667 from Maharashtra, followed by 12,535 from Tamil Nadu. 12,381 from Karnataka, 10,934 from Delhi, 10,286 from West Bengal, 8,741 from Uttar Pradesh and 7,179 from Andhra Pradesh. The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

11 ministers inducted in **Tirath Singh Rawat govt**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: Newly appointed Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat Friday inducted 11 minister in his cabinet.

Governor Baby Rani Maurya administered oath to new ministers at the swearing in ceremony held at Raj Bhawan in Dehradun.

Former Uttarakhand BJP Chief Bansidhar Bhagat, who was replaced by Madan Kaushik in Trivendra Singh Rawat government, was also inducted in Tirath Singh Rawat government.

Other ministers in Tirath Singh Rawat government are Satpal Maharaj, Harak Singh Rawat, Bishan Singh Chuphal, Yashpal Arya, Arvind Pandey, Subodh Uniyal, Ganesh Joshi, Dhan Singh Rawat, Rekha Arya and Yatishwaranand.

All the ministers took oath in Hindi except Arvind Pandey, who took oath in Sanskrit.

PM reiterates the symbolism of 'salt'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ahmedabad, March 12: While inaugurating the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' at the Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi elaborated upon the symbolism and meaning of salt. The PM described salt as a symbol of dignity of labour and equality. He said the future of a nation

becomes brighter only when it stays connected to the pride of its past heritage. "India has an enormous reservoir to be proud of in the form of a rich history and a vibrant cultural heritage.

The PM said,"Salt has never been valued by its price in India. For us salt means honesty, faith and lovalty. We still say that we've eaten the salt of the country. This is not because salt is a very precious item. This is because salt is a symbol of labour and equality for us." The PM said during his ad-



Independence in 1857, Mahatma Gandhi's return from abroad, reminding the country of the power of 'Satyagraha', the call for 'Purna Swaraj' by Lokmanya Tilak, Azad Hind Fauj's call for Dilli Chalo under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose...who can forget the slogan of Dilli Chalo? The work of continuously keeping the flame of the freedom movement

and monks."

The PM said that in a way the Bhakti movement had prepared the foundation for the nationwide freedom movement.

"The revival of the site associated with the Dandi March was completed two years ago. I myself had the opportunity to visit Dandi on this occasion," added the Prime Minister

SOAKED IN DEVOTION



A devotee whispering her wishes to 'Nandi' after offering prayers at a temple in Agartala

Farmers to now build houses at Singhu border

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Singhu (New Delhi), March 12: In order to deal with the scorching summer heat, on the 106th day of their agitation, farmers have started building 'pucca' houses (permanent structures made of bricks) at the

Singhu border. These houses can be easily seen when one moves a few kilometres ahead of the protest site at Singhu border, Now houses are being constructed at places where the farmers

had earlier pitched tents.

For building 'pucca' houses

with bricks, masons have been called all the way from Punjab. Karamjit Singh, who looks after the media cell of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), told IANS,"On Friday, farmer leaders from Punjab discussed constructing 'pucca' houses at Singhu

The meeting revolved around

der from the scorching summer. There are four houses in all being built at the border, but their number is likely to increase. All these houses will be two-storeyed.'

"Due to a large number of farmers at the border, these two-storey

buildings are being Earlier, farmers had built and if the agitation is prolonged set up plastic tents further, our prepaat the border, in rations need to be which they could stronger." brave the winter Mosquitoes in the night and the scorch-

chill but with the onset of summer, it will be difficult to stay in these tents

> are preparing to build pucca houses displays their resolve: they are not prepared to return to their homes till the government repeals the three farm laws.

ing sun during the

day has compelled

farmers to build

'pucca' houses at the

border. The manner

in which farmers

Farmers have been agitating on Delhi's borders since November 26, seeking the repeal of three agricultural laws passed by the Centre.

victim must be told about legal rights, says SC PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, March 12: Rape vic-

Pregnant rape +

tim, who becomes pregnant, must be told about her legal rights, the Supreme Court Friday said and issued notice to the Centre on a plea for setting up of medical boards in states and union territories to decide cases of unwanted pregnancies of over 20 weeks for termination. Section 3 of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971 prohibits termination of pregnancy after 20 weeks.

"If a woman is raped and is pregnant, she must be told about her legal rights," said the bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde.

The bench, also comprising justice A S Bopanna, took up the larger issue of setting up of medical boards in every states and UTs after lawyer V K Biju, appearing for a 14-year-old rape victim, decided not to seek permission to terminate the 26-week pregnancy of the survivor apparently on account of some medical opinion.

Earlier, besides seeking nod to abort the fetus of the victim, the plea has sought framing of guideline on appointment of medical boards "to decide cases of unwanted pregnancies that has crossed 20 weeks" in every states and UTs for termination of pregnancy. During brief hearing, Biju said he was not seeking the permission to abort now, but sought setting up of medical boards in states saying "When I was drafting this petition, I had seen the pain of the parents (of the girl)". "We will issue notice on this (prayer two). We will record your statement that you are not pressing prayer 1 (termination of pregnancy of the girl)," the bench said. The bench was hearing a plea filed by the minor girl who has said that she was pregnant after being raped by one of her relatives. The top court had earlier issued noticesto the Centre and Haryana government seeking their responses.

China harvesting 20% of world's data including from India

ACCORDING TO STRIKE SOURCE, APPROXIMATELY 20 PER CENT OF THE WORLD'S GLOBAL POPULATION ARE "BEING EITHER DIRECTLY OR POTENTIALLY SET UP FOR THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO COLLECT ALL OF THEIR PRIVATE DATA"

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: As the virtual private network (VPN) usage grows in countries like India to have a more secure and private Internet browsing experience, a new report has warned that Chinese government have access to massive sets of data like private emails, messenger conversations and personal records, as most of the VPNs being used are Chinese-owned, a new report has

According to Strike Source, approximately 20 per cent of the

world's global population are "being either directly or potentially set up for the Chinese government to collect all of their private data".

There are 4.57 billion Internet users in the world and 31 per cent of those use a VPN network.

'Upon reviewing a sample size of 30 popular VPNs, we can estimate that approximately 62 per cent of those are secretly Chineseowned VPNs currently installed on 878,354,000 consumer user devices," the nonpartisan news and analysis website said in its report, quoting information from Tom Jackson. a cybersecurity expert.

"VPN data is rich with information, and when paired with quantum computers decrypting the data traveling within those channels, we are vulnerable to attack from many different angles,' Jackson said.

"If the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) has access to 20 per cent of the data going through the world's VPNs generally, they should be expected to be using that data for a massive global spying operation that could translate into winning wars, shifting global power, and aiding the rise of an empire," the expert warned.



In India, approximately 129 million people use VPN to access the internet and we do not know how many of those now have data that

has been compromised. In 2020, 29 per cent of Americans reported using a VPN for personal use (up from 11 per cent in 2019).

"It means that 39 million Americans may be sharing personal or otherwise secret data with

Earlier this year, a number of VPN company databases were breached and leaked. The total amount of log data leaked exceeds one terabyte.

international



I know everyone in Auckland will be looking forward to a weekend with fewer restrictions. but we are asking that everyone keeps up the good habits that help us deal with cases if they emerge. That includes scanning in or keeping a record of everywhere you go JACINDA ARDERN | PRIME MINISTER, NEW ZEALAND

FIRST PAK SIKH TAKES **OATH AS SENATOR**

Gurdeep Singh from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party took the oath Friday as a Senator, becoming the first turban-clad Sikh representative from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the upper house of Parliament





no doubt that the third wave has started and basically, the phenomena that's driving it is the

spread of the UK strain

MINISTER FOR PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES, PAKISTAN

With the Dream Keeper's significant investment in the black community, we knew that it was critical to provide dedicated funding to address the unique needs in the Bblack transgender community

LONDON BREED MAYOR, SAN FRANCISCO



KIRSTI KAUPPI FINNISH AMBASSADOF

SHORT TAKES

Germany regrets neighbours' move

Berlin: Germany's top health official expressed regret Friday that some neighbouring countries have paused their use of AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine following reports of blood clots in some people, despite the lack of any evidence the shot was responsible. Health Minister Jens Spahn said that while Germany takes reports of possible side effects from vaccines "very, very seriously," both the European Medicines Agency and Germany's own vaccine oversight body have said they have no evidence of an increase in dangerous blood clots in connection with the shots.

Chinese regulator fines 12 companies

Hong Kong: China's market regulator said Friday that it fined a dozen firms, including games company Tencent Holdings and Chinese search engine firm Baidu Inc., for not disclosing past deals as authorities step up antimonopoly scrutiny in the internet sector. The companies, which included other firms such as ridehailing company Didi Mobility and Softbank, were fined 500,000 yuan (\$77,000) each for not disclosing previous investments, acquisitions or joint ventures, according to a statement by China's State Administration for Market Regulation.

SA's Zulu King Goodwill dies

Johannesburg: King Goodwill Zwelithini, the traditional leader of South Africa's Zulu nation, has died aged 72 after being hospitalised for more than a month, his family announced Friday. He had health problems related to diabetes, according to local news reports. Zwelithini, the 8th Zulu king, reigned for more than 50 years, making him the longest-serving Zulu monarch.

Gunmen attack Nigeria school

Lagos: Unidentified gunmen Friday attacked a school in Nigeria's Kaduna state and abducted a number of students, a police official said. Mohammed Jalige, a police spokesperson in Kaduna, confirmed the incident to Xinhua news agency, noting that the gunmen attacked the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization located in Mando area

QUAD **SUMMIT**

Exclusive blocs should not target third party: China



Beijing, March 12: Ahead of the Quad summit Friday, China said exchanges and cooperation between countries should contribute to mutual understanding rather than "targetting" a third party and refrain from "pursuing exclusive

US President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will attend the virtual summit, which is the first conclave of the top leaders of the Quadrilateral alliance, Friday.

Known as the "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue," representatives for the four-member nations have met periodically since its establishment in 2007.

Asked for China's reaction to the Quad conclave, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here that "exchanges and cooperation between nations should contribute to the mutual understanding and trust among nations, rather than targeting a third party or damaging the interest of a third party."

"We hope that relevant countries uphold the principles of openness, inclusiveness and win-win results and refrain from pursuing exclusive blocs and do things that

Exchanges and cooperation between nations should

contribute to the mutual understanding and trust among nations, rather than targetting a third party or damaging the interest of a third party

ZHAO LIJIAN I SPOKESMAN, FOREIGN MINISTRY, CHINA

are conducive to regional peace, stability and prosperity," he said. The meeting to be held virtually is expected to last about 90 minutes, during which all the four leaders would also lay out their vi-

sion of a free and open Indo-Pacific,

amidst China flexing its muscles in the strategically-vital region. China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. Beijing has also made substantial progress in militarising its man-made is-

lands in the past few years. Beijing claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. But Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims. In the East China Sea, China has territorial disputes with Japan.

The evolving situation in the Indo-Pacific region in the wake of China's increasing military muscle-flexing has become a major talking point

'America is coming back' declares Biden

THE PRESIDENT SETS GOAL OF JULY 4TH TO 'MARK INDEPENDENCE'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, March 12: President Joe Biden has told his countrymen that "America is coming back" as it is on a path to defeat the deadly coronavirus and revive the economy badly hit by the pandemic.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of confirmed cases and deaths at 29,150,068 and 529,102, respectively, according to Johns Hopkins University. Some 18 million Americans are still relying on unemployment insurance and some 400,000 small businesses have permanently closed their doors.

"America is coming back," Biden said in his maiden prime time address to the nation Thursday on the 50th day of his presidency.

The development, manufacture, distribution of vaccines in record time is a true miracle of science. It's one of the most extraordinary achievements any country has ever accomplished. We also just saw the Perseverance rover land on Mars, stunning images of our dreams that are now reality, another example of the extraordinary American ingenuity, commitment, and belief in science and one another," he said.

Reflecting on the last one year wherein the country lost more than 500,000 Americans, he said there is something else that the country lost.

"We lost faith in whether our government and our democracy can deliver on really hard things for the American people. But as I stand here tonight, we're proving once again something I've said time and time again to theprobably tired of hearing me say



it. I say it to foreign leaders and domestic alike. It's never, ever a good bet to bet against the

American people," Biden said. "And today, I signed into law the American Rescue Plan, an historic piece of legislation that delivers immediate relief to millions of peo-

ple. It includes USD 1,400 in direct rescue checks — payments. That means a typical family of four earning about USD 110,000 will get checks for USD 5,600 deposited if they have direct deposit or in a check — a Treasury check, he said.

This has been Biden's first and most pressing legislative priority since taking office January 20.

"It extends unemployment benefits. It helps small businesses. It lowers health care premiums for many. It provides food and nutrition keeps families in their homes. And it will cut child poverty in this country in half, according to the experts. And it funds all the steps to beat the virus and create millions of jobs," he said.

This will tackle the pandemic and get direct financial assistance and relief to Americans who need it the most

Taliban should be included in interim Afghan admin: Russia

AGENCIES

Moscow, March 12: Russia said Friday that the Taliban should be included in any Afghan interim administration, ahead of a conference in Moscow aimed at supporting peace talks between the Islamist group and Afghanistan's government.

Moscow is set to host a conference on Afghanistan March 18 and has invited several regional players, including Taliban representatives. It comes at a crucial time for the peace process ahead of a May 1 deadline for foreign troops to withdraw from Afghanistan.

The US has drafted a peace plan calling for the current Afghan government to be replaced with an interim administration until a new constitution is agreed and elections held, but Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has refused to step aside for a transitional government. "The formation of an interim coalition government should be decided by the Afghans themselves during national reconciliation negotiations," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters at her weekly briefing.

AMID PANDEMONIUM



A red rose lies on the ground in front of Buckingham Palace as reaction continues after Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's interview with Oprah Winfrey in London, Britain

US criticises China's HK move, set to raise 'genocide charge'

Washington, March 12: The United States Thursday condemned Chinese moves to change Hong Kong's electoral system and forecast "difficult" talks with Beijing's top diplomats next week, when the genocide Washington says China is committing against minority Muslims will be an issue the US side plans to raise

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan would not hold back when they meet with the Chinese diplomats in Alaska on March 18 and 19, "whether it's on Taiwan, or ... efforts to push back



democracy in Hong Kong, or on concerns we have about the economic relationship."

"Addressing the genocide against Uighur Muslims is something that will be a topic of discussion with the Chinese directly next week," she added.

In response, China's foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, urged the United States on Friday to stop interfering in China's affairs, including Hong Kong.

"China hopes both sides can focus on cooperation and manage differences," he said, adding that both sides should understand each others' policy intention correctly.

China rejects US charges that it has committed genocide against Uighur and other Muslims in its Xinjiang region and calls criticism of its behavior toward Hong Kong and self-ruled Taiwan unwarranted

interference in its internal affairs. China's parliament Thursday approved a draft decision to change Hong Kong's electoral system, further reducing democratic representation in the city's institutions and introducing a mechanism to vet politicians' loyalty to Beijing.

OZ THREATENS ACTION OVER EU CARBON TARIFF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Canberra, March 12: Australian Trade Minister Dan Tehan Friday said the country will fight an attempt by the European Union (EU) to introduce a carbon tariff on nations with weak emissions targets.

The European Parliament Thursday voted to move ahead with the proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which would impose a levy on all goods imported from countries that do not have a carbon pricing mechanism including Australia, reports Xinhua news agency.

If introduced, millions of dollars of new tariffs would be slapped on Australian exports of energy-intensive materials including aluminium, steel and chemicals.

In response, Tehan said that Australia would push back against the tariffs through the World Trade Organization (WTO).



We want a trade liberalization approach, not a protectionist approach, in terms of how we deal with emissions reduction," he said.

Both US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson have indicated that they could follow the EU's lead on the tariff.

Proponents of the CBAM say it would create a "level playing field" for goods produced under EU regimes that are subject to a carbon price and those from abroad that are not. It would ensure that imports are not cheaper than products from the EU.

Dutch inventor of audio cassette, Lou Ottens dies

The Hague, March 12: Lou Ottens, the Dutch inventor of the cassette tape, the medium of choice for millions of bedroom mix tapes, has died, said Philips, the company where he also helped develop the compact disc. Ottens died Saturday at age 94, Philips confirmed

A structural engineer who trained at the prestigious Technical University in Delft, he joined Philips in 1952 and was head of the Dutch company's product development department when he began work on an alternative for existing tape recorders with their cumbersome large spools of tape



POST OPRAH INTERVIEW

Harry and Meghan's popularity plummets in UK: Poll

REUTERS

London, March 12: The popularity of Prince Harry and his wife Meghan has tumbled in Britain and has never been lower following their explosive interview with US chat show host Oprah Winfrey, according to a poll Friday.

During the interview aired last Sunday, Meghan said her pleas for help while she felt suicidal were ignored and that one unnamed member of the family had asked how dark their son Archie's skin might be.

Meanwhile, Harry, Queen Elizabeth's grandson, also bemoaned his family's reaction of the couple's decision to step back from official duties

The tell-all interview has plunged the 1,000-year-old monarchy into its greatest crisis this century, and according to a YouGov poll, the



standing of the two royals has also

taken a big hit in the aftermath. It found 48% percent of the 1,664 respondents had a negative attitude of Harry compared to 45% with a positive view, the first time his net favourability rating had

been negative, and a fall of 15 points from a week earlier. Meanwhile, only three in 10 people had a positive view of Meghan,

while 58% had a negative opinion.

The tell-all interview has plunged the 1,000-year-old monarchy into its greatest crisis this century, and according to a poll, the standing of the two royals has also taken a big hit in the aftermath

As with other polls conducted since the interview, there was a divide between generations, with a majority of those aged 18 to 24 liking Harry and Meghan and those over 65 overwhelmingly having negative feelings towards them.

The only other member of the family to see their popularity fall was

Harry's father, heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles. The survey said 42% now had a negative view of him compared to 49% with a positive opinion.

That compared to the 94-yearold queen, who was liked by 80%, and Harry's elder brother and his wife Kate, who were popular with three-quarters of respondents.

A separate poll, conducted partly before the interview was broadcast in Britain, found support for the monarchy as a whole was largely unchanged with 63% backing the institution and 25% wanting an elected head of state.

But there were some worrying figures for the royal family. Among the youngest age group, support for an elected head of state was higher than that for the monarchy by 42% to 37%, although YouGov said this was within the margin of error.

His goal was simple. Make tapes and their players far more portable

and easier to use. "During the development of the cassette tape, in the early 1960s, he had a wooden block made that fit exactly in his coat pocket," said Olga Coolen, director of the Philips Museum in the southern city of

Eindhoven. "This was how big the first Compact Cassette was to be, making it a lot handier than the bulky tape recorders in use at the time.

The final product created in 1962 later turned into a worldwide hit, with more than 100 billion cassettes sold, many to music fans who would record their own compilations direct from the radio. Its popularity waned with the development of the compact disc, an invention Ottens also helped create as supervisor of a development team, Philips said.







business



The partnership between India and Japan very strongly indicate the foundation of professional, political, economic and common strategic interest, has made the foundation stronger GURUPRASAD MOHAPATRA | SECRETARY, DPIIT

INDIA IMPOSES ANTI-DUMPING DUTY

India has imposed anti-dumping duty on the Chinese antibacterial drug Ciprofloxacin Hydrochloride to guard the domestic industry against cheap imports from the neighbouring country





government is of encouraging MSMEs, with good track record of the past five years in terms of bank turnover, GST, income tax and based on balance sheet, to raise capital from the

NITIN GADKARI UNION MINISTER

I am happy to inform that our energy transition is so fast that...We will increase it to 60-65



POWER, NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY





SHORT **TAKES**

TWS shipment touches 8.4mn

New Delhi: India's TWS (True Wireless Stereo, commonly known as earbuds) market recorded a shipment of 8.4 million units, amounting to ₹2.432 crore in 2020. research firm techARC said Friday. With remote working growing substantially due to workfrom-home practice, TWS has become an essential accessory for smartphone users, techARC founder and chief analyst Faisal Kawoosa said, "At the same time, the ecosystem has aligned to enhance the experience of near-real audio. Covid-19 has had a positive impact on this product category, almost doubling its size," he added.

Ant Group CEO Hu steps down

Beijing: China's Ant Group CEO Simon Hu has resigned from his role, the company said Friday, as the fintech giant is being pushed by regulators to revamp operations after its failed \$37 billion IPO. Hu, who was named the chief executive of the Alibaba Group Holding in 2019, will be replaced by company veteran and Executive Chairman Eric Jing, the financial technology giant said. Jing will continue in his current role as chairman, he said in an internal memo.

Gold falls ₹291, silver tanks ₹1,096

New Delhi: Gold in the national capital declined ₹291 to ₹ 44,059 per 10 gram Friday reflecting fall in international prices of the precious metal and rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, it had closed at ₹44,350 per 10 gram. Silver also tanked ₹1,096 to ₹65,958 per kg, from ₹67,054 per kg in the previous trade. The Indian rupee jumped 20 paise to trade at 72.71 against the US dollar in opening deals Friday.

NMDC okays interim dividend

New Delhi: Mining giant NMDC Friday said its board has approved an interim dividend of ₹7.76 per share for the current financial year. The decision was taken at a board meeting on Thursday, the company said in a filing to the BSE. "The board of directors at a meeting held March 11, inter alia, declared an interim dividend at the rate of ₹7.76 paise per equity share of face value of Re 1 each for the financial year 2020-21." it said.

Industrial production contracts 1.6% in Jan

New Delhi, March 12: Industrial production re-entered the negative territory by contracting 1.6 per cent in January, mainly on account of the decline in output of capital goods, manufacturing and mining

The output of the manufacturing sector which constitutes 77.6 per cent of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) -- shrank by 2 per cent in January, as against a growth of 1.8 per cent during the same month last fiscal, as per data released by the government Friday.

The worst performance was witnessed by the capital goods sector. which recorded a contraction of 9.6 per cent during the month under review, compared to a 4.4 per cent decline a year ago.

A contraction of 3.7 per cent was registered in the mining sector in January, against a positive growth of 4.4 per cent in the yearago period.

Meanwhile, the National Statistical Office (NSO), which releases the IIP data, has revised upwardly the IIP number for December 2020 from an earlier estimate of 1 per cent to 1.56 per cent.

The factory out was in negative territory in November 2020. It had posted positive growth during September and October 2020.

Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, Icra, said the slippage of consumer goods back into a year-on-year degrowth in January 2021 is a key disappointment.

"We remain circumspect regarding the intensity of the re-



RE-ENTERS NEGATIVE ZONE

he output of the manufacturing sector which constitutes 77.6% of the IIP shrank by 2% in January

The NSO, which releases the IIP data, has revised upwardly the IIP number for December 2020 from an earlier estimate of 1% to 1.56%

bound in consumption immediately after the vaccine rollout widens, as some categories of households may choose to rebuild the savings that they had drained during the lockdown and post-lockdown period," she said.

The IIP contracted by 12.2 during April-January as against an almost flat growth of 0.5 per cent seen in the same period last fiscal. As per the data, there was a contraction of 0.2 per cent in the consumer durables segment and 6.8 per cent in the consumer non-durable section. These two segments were in contraction during January 2020 also.

Nayar said the sharp worsening in the performance of capital goods in January 2021 was led by an adverse base effect, which is expected to be transient. "While we expect the Central Government's capital spending to display a quick pace in the fourth quarter FY2021, the outgo from state governments is likely to be mixed, and the spending of the private sector may remain muted in the near term," she said.

M Govinda Rao, CEA, Brickwork Ratings, said the contraction in IIP numbers for January comes as a bit of surprise after turning positive in December.

Over 30,000 sellers register on Bharat eMarket: CAIT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 12: Over 30,000 sellers across India have registered on the vendor onboarding mobile app launched by CAIT Thursday for its upcoming e-commerce portal 'Bharat eMarket', the traders' body said Friday.

Within 24 hours of launch, more than 30,000 sellers across the country have registered on the platform whose e-dukaan will be created from March 15," the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said.

CAIT President BC Bhartia said such a rousing response to Bharat eMarket proves that foreign multinational e-commerce giants operating in India were not giving a fair opportunity for Indian sellers

The traders' body said it has nominated 40 trade leaders as brand ambassadors of the Bharat eMarket portal.

Traders' body CAIT on Thursday launched a vendor onboarding mobile app for its upcoming e-

commerce portal 'Bharat eMarket'. The app will enable businesses and service providers to register



on the portal and create their own 'e-dukaan". CAIT said its 'purely Indian' Bharat eMarket portal will comply with all the rules and regulations of the country.

ED seeks documents from Amazon: Report

A senior agency source told the newswire that the ED continues to investigate the US e-commerce giant



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: The Enforcement Directorate has recently asked Amazon.com Inc for information related to its operations in India, a global newswire reported Friday. A senior agency source told the newswire that the ED continues to investigate the US e-commerce giant.

Last month, the source at the financial probe agency had said that the ED will examine the findings in a recent special report by the global newswire which revealed that the company has for years given preferential treatment to a small group of sellers on its India platform and used them to circumvent the country's foreign investment rules. For several years, Amazon has been under investigation by the agency for possible violation of foreign investment rules. Such probes typically take years in India, and in most cases the details are not made public, the report said.

The special report by the newswire is based on internal Amazon documents dated between 2012 and 2019. It provided an inside

look into the cat-and-mouse game Amazon has played with the Indian government, adjusting its corporate structures each time the government imposed new restrictions aimed at protecting the small traders.

On Friday, a source in the Enforcement Directorate was quoted as saying, "Obviously we have sought information (from Amazon)." Asked specifically if the agency had sought documents from the company, the source said, "Information means information and documents." The source declined to comment further on what type of documents have been sought, or if any company executive has been summoned for questioning, the report said.

An Amazon spokeswoman in India declined to comment on the matter, as per the report.

In the report published last month, Amazon said it is confident of its compliance with Indian law, adding that it "does not give preferential treatment to any seller on its marketplace", and that it "treats all sellers in a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner".

UK GDP SHRINKS 2.9%; **BREXIT CUTS EXPORTS**

London, March 12: The British economy shrank 2.9 per cent in January as the nation was hit by a new round of coronavirus restrictions and Brexit slashed exports to the European Union.

The Office for National Statistics said Friday that the drop in gross domestic product was fueled by declines in retail trade and education as efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 shut nonessential shops and schools across the U.K. Britain's economy is about 9 per cent smaller than it was before the coronavirus pandemic began in February 2020, the ONS said.

first time since April, driven by a drop in exports as the nation felt the full effects of its departure from the EU for the first time after transitional arrangements ended December 31, the ONS said. Exports of goods to the EU

plunged almost 41 per cent in January, while imports from the bloc dropped 28.8 per cent, the ONS re-

Britain's decision to leave the EU ended more than 40 years of free trade with the 27-nation bloc and its 450 million people.

Shipments between Britain and the EU are now subject to tariffs, border checks and increased paperwork that have curtailed trade.



(Number of cars sold) Maruti Suzuki Hyundai Motors 8,319 **PASSENGER** Renault _______3,927 Toyota Kirloskar 3,415 Volkswagen-India 2,123 **FEBRUARY 2021** Ford India 1,803 Total: 155,128 Nissan Motors 5918 **FEB 2020: 148,541** Skoda Auto 851 **Exports** Tata Motors O -23.01% M&M O Production 23,230 181,247 Mahi. Electric O 177,027 30,173 General Motors O 2.38% FEBRUARY 2020 Fiat India O Source: SIAM GRAPHICS_

FinMin asks Sebi to withdraw directive on tenure of AT1 bonds

New Delhi: The finance ministry

has asked market regulator Sebi to withdraw its directive to mutual fund houses to treat additional Tier I (AT-1) bonds as having maturity of 100 years as it could disrupt the market and impact capital raising by banks. AT-1 bonds are considered perpetual in nature, similar to equity shares as per the Basel III guidelines. They form part of the tier I capital of banks. Sebi earlier this week issued regulations that put a limit of 10 per cent for cumulative investments by MFs in Tier I and Tier II bonds. It also clarified that the maturity of all perpetual bonds should be treated as 100 years from the date of issuance for the purpose of valuation.

Freelance jobs in India grew 22% in January

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai. March 12: With the pandemic disrupting the job market, hiring for freelance jobs in India grew 22 per cent in January 2021 compared to a year ago, said a report from job site Indeed Friday. The data also showed that postings for freelance jobs spiked between May and June 2020, a near two-fold increase from the same period in 2019.

With the implementation of workfrom-home structures, job search activity post March 2020 was consistently higher than pre-pandemic levels, peaking in April 2020. However, data showed that at any point in time, freelance job postings have outstripped freelance job

The growth was driven by creative, tech, sales and recruitment fields as these sectors contributed to 55 per cent of the freelance jobs posted on Indeed.

As of January 2021, freelance writer was the most in-demand job in this segment, followed by freelance designer, recruiter, developer and digital marketer.

Business development executive and PhP developer also emerged in the top-10 freelance job titles in India. Data highlights that searches for freelance jobs were highest in the 20-29 year age group -- this cohort contributed to 73 per cent of freelance job searches on Indeed in January 2021.

"Pushing the freelance community to the fore, the pandemic year witnessed increased hiring and search momentum for freelance jobs on Indeed," Sashi Kumar, Managing Director, Indeed India,

India 5th most attractive 'growth destination' globally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: India has emerged as the fifth most attractive growth destination, slipping one position after being surpassed by the United Kingdom, according to a global survey of CEOs. The United States is the number one market that CEOs are looking to in terms of growth over the next 12 months and China is at the second spot.

The findings are part of leading consultancy PwC's 24th Annual Global CEO Survey that covered 5,050 CEOs in 100 countries and territories, including India.

"At 17 per cent, Germany holds on to its number three spot on the list of growth destinations, while the UK, post-Brexit, moves up to number four (11 per cent), surpassing India (8 per cent). Japan also rises up the ranking to become the sixth most attractive growth destination, overtaking Australia which held that position last year," as per the survey.

The US has extended its lead as the number one market that CEOs are looking to for growth over the next 12 months at 35 per cent, seven percentage points ahead of China at 28 per cent. In 2020, the US was only one percentage point ahead of China, it added. The survey found that 76 per

cent of CEOs worldwide expect the global economic recovery to improve in 2021, showing record levels of optimism about growth a

year after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

As cross-border competition heats up global tax debates, CEOs foresee

some cooling of global trade tensions. Both trade conflict and protectionism dropped on the CEO threat list, in relative and absolute terms, the survey released on Thursday said.

"But, there's considerable nuance behind that top-line story. Trade conflict still ranks as a topten threat in China and Germany, both of

which depend on findings are part ` export-driven of PwC's 24th Annual China, which Global CEO Survey that has often covered 5,050 CEOs in found itself at the centre of 100 countries and debates, trade territories conflict is CEOs' second-highest

source of worry "It's hard not to wonder whether fundamental tensions will reassert themselves as we move past the landmark moments, such as the resolution of the US presidential election and of Brexit uncertainties, that immediately preceded our survey period," it noted.

Further, the survey said it was important to recognise that trade patterns and partnerships are in flux.

"For example, CEOs in the US are reducing their emphasis on China as a growth driver, and increasing their focus on Canada and Mexico: compared to the findings in our last survey, US CEOs' interest in the latter two countries rose by 78 per cent," it said, adding that those trends are contributing to a broader shift of the US extending its lead over Chinaas global CEOs' most important

growth destination.

ENGLAND DOWN INDIA

1st T20I: Magnificent efforts from bowlers allow visitors take lead in five-match series with a comprehensive 8-wicket win

for flashy shots when

placement would have

served them well. The

track had varied pace

and required patience

quickly and adjusted

Iyer though gauged

his game accordingly, playing a

sensible innings that helped them

cross the 100-run mark. Laced with

eight boundaries and a six, and

coming off 48 balls, it is Iver's best

T20 knock. He fell in the last over.

ing the attack with leg-spinner Adil

Rashid, who was not only eco-

nomical but also dismissed Virat

Kohli (0) after KL Rahul (1) dragged

one back onto his stumps from

Feeling the heat, Shikhar Dhawan

who got the opportunity since

Rohit Sharma has been rested - at-

tempted to break the shackles with

a flashy shot off Wood but com-

pletely missed the line to see his tim-

Jofra Archer (3/23).

England surprised India by open-

from batsmen.



(From L): Chris Jordan, Eoin Morgan & Jofra Archer celebrate after India lose a wicket

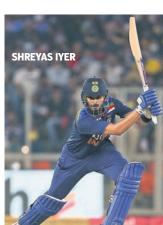
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 12: The Indians were looked completely out of touch as they suffer a comprehensive eight-wicket loss against England in the first T20I here, Friday.

Indian batsmen struggled to score freely before Shreyas Iyer showed the way with a dogged 67run knock that took the hosts to 124 for seven. However, it looked like the visitors were batting on completely different wicket when they comfortably chased down the target in just 15.3 overs.

With a paltry target on the board, Jason Roy and Jos Buttler gave the visitors a flying start as the duo forged together a 72-run opening stand in just eight overs. Yuzvendra Chahal broke the stand when he trapped Buttler for 28 in front.

Roy was unfortunate when he got out on 49 off the first delivery bowled by Washington Sundar. However, it was the Indians' last



Jonny Bairstow (26 n o) took England home with an unbroken 41-run partnership.

Earlier, the home batsmen never got the momentum going in the series-opener as England's pace-heavy attack, led by Mark Wood, used the extra bounce effectively to trouble

Most of the Indian batsmen went

JOUNLOAND								
INDIA INNINGS	R	В	4s	6s				
Shikhar Dhawan b Wood	4	12	0	0				
KL Rahul b Archer	1	4	0	0				
Virat Kohli c Jordan b Rashid	0	5	0	0				
R Pant c Bairstow b Stokes	21	23	2	1				
Shreyas Iyer c Malan b Jordan	67	48	8	1				
Hardik Pandya c Jordan b Archer	19	21	1	1				
Shardul Thakur c Malan b Archer	0	1	0	0				
Washington Sundar not out	3	3	0	0				
Axar Patel not out	7	3	1	0				
Extras: (w-2)	2							
Total: (20 overs) 124/7								
Fall: 1/2 (Rahul), 2/3 (Kohli), 3/20 (Dhawan), 4/48								

SCORECARD

(Pant), 5/102 (Pandya), 6/102 (Thakur), 7/117 (Iyer). Bowling: Adil Rashid 3-0-14-1, Jofra Archer 4-1-23-3, Mark Wood 4-0-20-1, Chris Jordan 4-0-27-1,

Dell'Stokes 5 o 25 1, Sulli Gullan 2 o 15 o.									
ENGLAND INNINGS	R	В	4s	6s					
Jason Roy Ibw b Sundar	49	32	4	3					
Jos Buttler Ibw b Chahal	28	24	2	1					
Dawid Malan not out	24	20	2	1					
Jonny Bairstow not out	26	17	1	2					
Extras: (W-3)	3								
Total: (15.3 overs)	30/	2							

Fall: 1/72 (Buttler), 2/89 (Roy). Bowling: Axar Patel 3-0-24-0, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 2-0-15-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-44-1, Shardul Thakur 2-0-16-0, Hardik Pandya 2-0-13-0, Washington the nature of the pitch Sundar 2.3-0-18-1.

> In-form batsman Rishabh Pant (21) was prompted to number four. He struck the ball clean, which included a reverse-flick off Archer for a six, but the England bowlers kept it tight for the home team, which was tottering at 34 for three in eight overs.

> Pant and Iyer added 28 runs for the fourth wicket before the former hit one straight to Jonny Bairstow off Ben Stokes. That brought Hardik Pandya to the crease, who true to his style, looked for some big hits but could not do much.

> The visiting players wore black armbands in memory of former cricketer Joey Benjamin, who died



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 12: South African opener Lizelle Lee single-handedly destroyed India's chances with a career-best unbeaten 132 (131b, 16x4. 2x6) as the home team lost by six runs via the Duckworth-Lewis (DLS) method in the rain-marred third women's ODI of the fivematch series here Friday.

Chasing a competitive 249, Lee starred for the visitors with her breathtaking knock that came off 131 balls and had 16 fours and two hits over the fence. South Africa now lead the series 2-1.

Lee kept South Africa abreast with the required rate, which eventually proved crucial after rain played spoilsport with the visitors at 223 for four in 46.3 overs, six ahead of India via the DLS method.

Earlier, Punam Raut struck a second successive half-century -77 off 108 balls – to power India to a fighting score. Also, India skipper Mithali Raj (36) became the first Indian woman to score 10,000 international runs during a 77-run third wicket stand with Raut.

South Africa were off to a decent start in their chase with the pair of Lee and stand-in skipper Laura Wolvaardt (12) adding 41 runs for the opening wicket.

After Wolvaardt was cleaned up by off-spinner Deepti Sharma, Lara Goodall (16) and Lee took the innings second wicket.

Mignon du Preez (37) too made a significant contribution as Lee kept South Africa's chase alive by scoring only the third century of her career.

Lee ton spoils Mithali party

Lee's century, the first of the series, reached the 100 mark in just 99 balls and that included 13 fours and a six. Du Preez and Lee shared 97 runs for the third wicket.

India bounced back by picking two wickets – Du Preez and Marizanne Kapp – in a span of two overs to even things out by reducing South Africa to 178 for four in the 38th over.

However, the threat was far from over for India as a determined Lee stood in between the hosts and the victory. She was in no mood to give up and continued her attacking batting to keep the visitors in tune with the required rate.

Lee found an able partner in Anne Bosch (16 not out) and shared unconquered 45 runs for the fifth wicket to take South Africa home. For India, veteran Jhulan Goswami picked up two wickets giving away just 20 runs in her 9 overs.

Earlier, Raut, who made 62 in a winning cause in the last match, continued her good form after the hosts were put in to bat. She struck 11 boundaries during her knock.

This was after India lost big-hitting opener Jemimah Rodrigues (0) in the second delivery of the in-

Mithali Raj became the second player to reach 10.000 international runs (10.001 in 291 innings) in women's cricket after former England skipper **Charlotte Edwards** (10,273 in 316 innings)

swinging one to Sinalo Jafta off Shabnim Ismail (2/46).

Raut joined Smriti Mandhana (25 off 27) at the crease and the duo once again came to India's rescue, sharing 64 runs off 70 balls for the second wicket to take the team forward. Mandhana, however, couldn't convert her start into a big score.

Mithali, only the second internationally to complete 10.000 runs across all formats, departed soon after reaching the major milestone, flicking a Anne Bosch delivery straight to Mignon du Preez at mid-wicket. Her 36 runs came off 50 balls and she hit five boundaries in the process.

Raut also fell soon after and Harmanpreet Kaur (36 off 46) played a quick knock before becoming Ismail's second victim as India reached 221 for five in the 45th over

Towards the end. Deepti (36 n o) and Sushma Verma (14 n o) remained unbeaten and shared 27 runs for the sixth wicket to take

MCFC, ATKMB face off for crown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, March 12: As many as 114 games, 295 goals, 87,811 passes and 7307 tackles later, the ISL will culminate with a heavyweight summit showdown between Mumbai City FC (MCFC) and ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) here, Saturday.

The match that lends meaning to every single touch taken so far. in what has been an exciting Hero ISL season, will be played at the Fatorda Stadium. When MCFC take on ATKMB in the summit clash, there will be no more complex equations in play. The winner takes home the trophy. It's as simple as that. Few would argue that there is a

better candidate for the final than these two-both Bagan and Mumbai have been head and shoulders above the rest throughout the season. Both the teams come into the final with identical records, 12 wins and just four defeats in the league stage.

Despite a nervy penalty-shootout win over FC Goa in the semifinal, it will be Mumbai who head into the final full of confidence. They did the double over Bagan in the league stage the latter of those victories handing them the League Winners Shield.

For Mumbai, this will be a first-ever final, but coach Sergio Lobera, and a handful of his players have been here before when FC Goa lost to Bengaluru FC in 2018-19. The team though has looked confident under Lobera.

There will be few selection dilemmas for Lobera, with the exception



of figuring out Mandar Rao Dessai's replacement. The Goan will miss the final due to suspension.

In the other corner, there is Bagan, buoyed by Antonio Habas' almost superhuman record in knockout games. He has already tasted glory twice and has a chance to create history by winning his second

straight title and third overall. On the eve of the final, the Spaniard sounded as focused as ever. Habas dismissed that previous results had no bearing on the match but that his side was braced for a tough test. The match will also decide the fate of the golden boot and golden glove winners. While Bagan striker Roy Krishna and Goa's Igor Angulo are tied on 14 goals for the golden boot, a goal Saturday will hand the award to the Fijian, who has played more minutes than the Spaniard.

The race for the golden glove award is between Mumbai custodian Amrinder Singh and ATKMB's Arindam Bhattacharja. Both the players have 10 clean sheets to their name. At the moment, Arindam is in pole position, having conceded fewer goals.

Kjaer saves AC Milan the blushes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, March 12: AC Milan defender Simon Kjaer scored in injury time to secure a 1-1 draw at Manchester United in the first leg of the Europa League's round of 16. Kjaer capitalised on poor defending to head in a corner in the 92nd minute to give the Italian side a slight advantage ahead of the second leg next week.

Roma, Tottenham, Arsenal and Ajax all put one foot into the quarterfinals with comfortable wins. But the meeting of two former European heavyweights remains evenly poised.

United took the lead after 18-yearold substitute Amad Diallo scored his first European goal just five minutes after coming on. But the home team was disorganized for Rade Krunic's late corner and goalkeeper Dean Henderson was unable to keep out Kjaer's thumping header.

Milan had two early goals ruled out at Old Trafford. Rafael Leao was offside in the fifth minute, while Franck Kessie displayed brilliant technique to score in the 11th only to see the goal chalked off through VAR as the ball had struck his arm.

The visitors remained in control until United captain Harry Maguire somehow struck the post from point-blank range with the goal at his mercy after Bruno Fernandes headed on a corner in the 38th. Fernandes was United's key



<mark>CRUCIAL AWAY GOAL:</mark> Simon Kjaer (R) is ecstatic after scoring the late equaliser for AC Milan at Old Trafford, Thursday

player, providing a lofted ball over the top for Amad to head in the opener in the 50th minute.

KANE DELIVERS

Harry Kane scored twice to put Tottenham in a commanding position with a 2-0 home win over Dinamo Zagreb. The England striker converted a rebound after Erik Lamela's effort hit the post in the 25th, and wrapped up the win in the 70th. Kevin TheophileCatherine failed to deal with Serge Aurier's cross leaving Kane to score with a low finish.

ARSENAL VICTORIOUS

Mohamed Elneny put Arsenal in touching distance of the quarterfinals by sealing a 3-1 win over Olympiakos in Greece. Martin Odegaard opened the scoring with a thunderous long-range strike in the 34th but the visitors missed further chances in the first half.

Youssef El-Arabi capitalised on poor pass from Arsenal keeper Bernd Leno to equalise in the 58th. Gabriel restored the visitors' lead in the 80th with a header, five minutes before Elneny made sure of the win when the home side failed to close him down and he let fly

Vijender to take on Russian Lopsan March 19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: India's professional boxing star Vijender Singh will fight Russia's Artysh Lopsan in his return to the ring after over a year disrupted by COVID-19 during which he relied on his amateur contemporary and former Commonwealth Games bronzemedallist Jai Bhagwan for training assistance.

Vijender and Losan will square off March 19 in a super middleweight (76kg) showdown on the rooftop deck of the Majestic Pride Casino Ship in Panaji, Goa. Lopsan's name was revealed at a press conference here.

"It wasn't the easiest year and initially it took a while for the body to

respond. But the last two months have been fabulous for me. Jai Bhagwan (2010 CWG bronze-medallist) helped me with my training here in Gurgaon," Vijender told PTI on how he geared up for his return. "I was also in touch with (my manchester-based British trainer) Lee Beard for some online help," he added.

The 26-year-old Losan has fought six pro bouts, claiming four victories, including two knockouts. His last contest was in December 2020 against compatriot Yusup Magomedbekov, which he won via Technical Knockout.

Vijender, on the other hand, is unbeaten throughout his professional career. His record of 12-0 includes eight knockouts. The 2008 Beijing Olympics bronze-medallist defeated



Ghana's former Commonwealth champion Charles Adamu in Dubai to claim his 12th successive win in November 2019.

"Lee couldn't be here because of COVID restrictions but he has been supportive and has been there online whenever I have needed advice. Jai, you can say, is my coach right now," Vijender said about his longtime friend with whom he competed in the 2010 CWG in Delhi.

Lee has been Vijender's trainer ever since he took the professional plunge in 2015. Jai is a serving police officer in Haryana and took leave to assist Vijju. He is a twotime Asian championship bronzewinner and has competed alongside Viiender in several international and national amateur events.

Jahanvi wins fifth leg of WPGT meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram, March 12: Jahanvi Bakshi brought home a card of even par 72 in the final round to cruise to a four-shot win over a fighting Vani Kapoor in the fifth leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour (WPGT) here, Friday.

Jahanvi's massive 4-shot overnight $lead\,gave\,her\,ample\,breathing\,space$ despite Vani's 3-under 69 on the final day. Jahanvi totalled 4-under 212, while Vani was even par 216 to end runner-up for the third time in the last three starts.

Tvesa Malik (69) finally found her rhythm and rose to tied-3rd alongside Hitaashee Bakshi, who was threeunder for the front nine and four-over for the back nine. Amateur Avani Prashanth had another fine run as she finished sole fifth with her best card of the week at one-under 71.

Jahanvi's win means the two Bakshi sisters have now won once each on the WPGT. Hitaashee won last December and Jahanyi added to the family silverware Friday.

In the final round, while Vani and Hitaashee had excellent front nine scores - Vani going out in 4-under 32 and Hitaashee in 3-under 33, Jahanvi, despite yielding some shots, kept her nerves on the tougher back nine and stayed ahead.

Printed and published by Tathagata Satpathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha; Phone: 7894447142 (Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy, RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159