



## ISHA'S PRIORITY

Actor Isha Koppikar says she is going to engage in self-love this Valentine's Day

LEISURE P2



## NEW TURN OF EVENTS

Rishi Sunak was allegedly photographed standing beside PM Johnson at a gathering to celebrate PM's birthday in June

INTERNATIONAL P10



## FRESH START

India will try to erase their middle-order woes when they face West Indies under Rohit Sharma in the ODI series

SPORTS P12

**ODM GLOBAL SCHOOL**  
Unlock your potential

**ADMISSIONS OPEN**  
I - XI (Day Boarding)  
VI - XI (Residential)

www.odmglobalschool.org  
1800-120-2316

## Life-sized Mahatma statue vandalised in NY

**NEW YORK:** A life-sized bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi, located here in Union Square near Manhattan, was vandalised Saturday, an act strongly condemned as 'despicable' by the Consulate General of India, triggering shock and disappointment among the Indian-American community. The incident took place early Saturday, when the statue was defaced by some unknown persons, the Consulate General of India in New York said. "The Consulate condemns this act of vandalism in the strongest terms," it said.



## PLFI zonal commander arrested from Assam

**ROURKELA:** Rourkela police arrested a zonal commander of Maoist splinter group Peoples' Liberation Front of India (PLFI) from Gogamukh locality in Assam police said Saturday. The accused ultra was identified as Arjun Rana alias Kapil Pathak, a close associate of the outlawed outfit's chief Dinesh Gope. A semi-automatic rifle and six bullets were seized from his possession, Rourkela SP Mukesh Kumar Bhadoo said at a press meet organised at the district police headquarters, Saturday. Rana was taken for interrogation and later produced in a local court. Rana used to target businessmen in Rourkela and in adjoining areas of Sundargarh district for extortion and was also involved in kidnapping. He is a key conduit of the Jharkhand-based PLFI and was absconding. The criminals used to demand protection money ranging between ₹30 lakh and ₹1 crore. It was ascertained during initial probe that some traders in Rourkela have paid money to the criminals after receiving threats, the SP said.

**JSW Cement**  
The Leaders' Choice

1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

## Lata Mangeshkar back on ventilator

**Mumbai, Feb 5:** Singing legend Lata Mangeshkar is back on the ventilator after her health deteriorated and is undergoing 'aggressive therapy,' a doctor treating her said Saturday.

The 92-year-old singer tested positive for Covid with mild symptoms and was admitted January 8 to Breach Candy Hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) where she is being treated by Dr Pratit Samdani and his team of doctors.

"Lata Mangeshkar didi is in Breach Candy Hospital, in the ICU. She continues to be under aggressive therapy and is tolerating the procedures well at this moment," Samdani told reporters outside the south Mumbai hospital.

Earlier in the day, he said Mangeshkar's health had worsened. "She is not doing well. She continues to be in the ICU under treatment and has been put on ventilator again," Samdani told PTI.



A faculty member talks with the students wearing hijab, after the school authorities denied them entry, in Kundapura of Udipi district, Saturday. PTI PHOTO

# 'Hijab' row takes political colour

**Congress accuses the Sangh Parivar of trying to create communal disharmony in the name of hijab, while BJP says it won't allow 'Talibanisation' of the education system**

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, Feb 5:** The 'hijab' row has taken a political colour in Karnataka, as the ruling BJP stood strongly in support of uniform related rules followed by educational institutions, calling the headscarf, a religious symbol, while the Opposition Congress has come out in support of Muslim girls.

There have been several instances in coastal Karnataka, where Muslim girl students, turning up at colleges in hijab were not allowed into classes, and Hindu boys responded with saffron shawls as a counter to it.

The issue that initially began in January at a government PU College in Udipi where six students who at-

## CONTROVERSY IN EUROPE

**O**ver the years, across Europe, many courts have been able to impose restrictions on donning religious symbols or garb in the workplace as well as public spaces such as parks. France prohibited the wearing of hijabs in state schools in 2004. In July, 2021 the European Union's highest court, the European Court of Justice, reaffirmed that companies in Europe can forbid women from wearing headscarves to work — a ruling that led to widespread condemnation from human rights activists and Muslim nations for promoting 'Islamophobia'



tended classes wearing headscarves in violation of the stipulated dress code were sent out has now spread to a few other colleges in nearby Kundapur and Byndoor.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday said the country is robbing the future of its daughters by letting the hijab come in the way of their education. Coming out in support of the hijab-wearing Muslim girl students, he said the Goddess Saraswati does not differentiate and gives knowledge to all.

"By letting students' hijab come in the way of their education, we are robbing the future of the daughters of India."

"Ma Saraswati gives knowledge to all. She doesn't differentiate. #SaraswatiPuja," Gandhi said on

Twitter. Meanwhile, Congress Legislature Party leader and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who has thrown his weight behind Muslim girls on their right to wear the hijab to educational institutions, accused the BJP and RSS of trying to create communal disharmony throughout the state in the name of hijab. He urged Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai to immediately put a brake to this and arrest those who instigate people.

Further claiming that the main agenda of the Sangh Parivar is to deny education to Muslim girls in the name of hijab, Siddaramaiah said, PM Narendra Modi speaks about 'Beti Bachao, Beti Pado'. "Is he not aware of this incident?"

Meanwhile, the BJP's state president and MP Nalin Kumar Kateel said the government will not allow hijab at educational institutions and will take strict measures to ensure that things go as per rules of the school, and won't let things be turned into 'Taliban like.'

"There is no scope for such things (wearing hijab in classrooms). Our government will take stringent action. People have to follow the rules and regulations of the school. We will not allow Talibanisation (of the education system)," he told reporters here.

Seeking to end the hijab controversy, the state government Saturday ordered banning wearing clothes which disturb equality, integrity and public order in schools and colleges. "Invoking 133 (2) of the Karnataka Education Act-1983, which says a uniform style of clothes has to be worn compulsorily. The private school administration can choose a uniform of their choice," the government order said. It said the students have to wear the dress chosen by the College Development Committee or the appellate committee of the administrative board of the pre-university colleges, which come under the pre-university education department.

## Dharitri scribe killed in landmine explosion

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna/M Rampur, Feb 5:** Rohit Biswal, a reporter of Odia daily Dharitri, was killed in a landmine blast allegedly triggered by Maoists near Tulaghat bridge on Rahul river in Kalahandi district, Saturday. He was 47.

The incident occurred when Biswal had been to the place to collect reports on Maoists sticking posters and putting up banners in the area asking the people to boycott the panchayat polls.

He was on his way to M Rampur from Mohangiri on his bike when a high intensity blast within 100 meters of the bridge killed him. His mutilated body and damaged bike were recovered from the spot.

The state government declared an ex-gratia of ₹13 lakh to the next of kin of Biswal. While the Odisha Police will provide ₹9 lakh, the re-



Rohit Biswal

maining ₹4 lakh will be given from the Journalist Welfare Fund. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed grief over the death of the journalist. The Kalahandi Police and the CRPF rushed to the spot upon receiving the information and started an investigation.

## Centre to buy 5 crore doses of Corbevax

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** The Centre has placed a purchase order with Biological E for five crore doses of Covid vaccine Corbevax each costing ₹145 excluding taxes, official sources said Saturday.

The government is yet to decide on which segment of beneficiaries this new vaccine would be administered. However, according to sources, discussions are underway in technical groups and in the Health Ministry's immunisation division about expanding the scope of the precaution doses which are currently being given to health-care and frontline workers, and comorbid senior citizens.

The HLL Lifecare Limited, a public sector undertaking, has issued the supply order of Corbevax to Biological E in January-end on behalf of the Union Health Ministry. According to the order, the Hyderabad-based company is expected to provide the supplies in February.

## SC directs release of Odia man jailed in WB

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** The Supreme Court has directed the West Bengal government to release Sagar Behera of Bhadrak, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in a murder case of 2001.

Behera had approached the apex court claiming he was a juvenile when the offence was committed.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and Sanjiv Khanna directed the release of Behera from jail on suspension of sentence on appropriate terms and conditions as may be fixed by the trial court.

The bench directed that the West Bengal government shall consider and decide the request for premature release/remission within a period of two months. The court also noted that the appellant has already suffered incarceration of more than twenty years and jail authorities, after considering the conduct of the appellant, have recommended premature release/remission of sentence.

Significantly, Behera had raised the plea of juvenility on the date of the offence by placing reliance upon the certificate dated February



19, 2021 issued by the headmaster of Gopinathjew Nodal UP School, Gopinathpur, Bhadrak.

The apex court had directed the Sessions Judge, Bhadrak, to examine the original school records and to record the statement of the headmaster of the school who had issued the certificate. On the basis of evidence adduced and relying upon the Transfer Certificate and school records, the report states that the date of birth of the appellant is May 20, 1984.

The man was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment on the charges of murder by a trial court in March 2004. Earlier, the Calcutta High Court had dismissed his plea and upheld the conviction in September 2020.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, we usually don't act on hate speeches this promptly but you just can't say you HATE politicians

## Mt Everest's highest glacier rapidly losing ice: Study

**Carbon dating showed the top layer of ice was around 2,000 years old, suggesting that the glacier was thinning more than 80 times faster than the time it took to form, according to the study**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Kathmandu, Feb 5:** Ice on a glacier near the summit of Mount Everest that took millennia to form has shrunk dramatically in the last three decades due to climate change, a new study has shown.

The South Col formation may already have lost around 55 metres (180 feet) of thickness in the last 25 years, according to research led by the University of Maine and pub-



lished this week by Nature. Carbon dating showed the top layer of ice was around 2,000 years old, suggesting that the glacier was thinning more than 80 times faster than the time it took to form, the study said. At that rate, South Col was "prob-

ably going to disappear within very few decades," lead scientist Paul Mayewski told National Geographic. "It's quite a remarkable transition," he added.

The South Col glacier is around 7,900 metres (26,000 feet) above sea

level and a kilometre below the peak of the world's highest mountain. Other researchers have shown that Himalayan glaciers are melting at an accelerating rate.

As the glaciers shrink, hundreds of lakes have formed in the foothills

of the Himalayan mountains that could burst and unleash floods.

Nepali climber Kami Rita Sherpa, who has climbed the Everest a record 25 times since 1994, told news agency AFP Saturday that he had witnessed changes on the mountain firsthand.

"We now see rock exposed in areas where there used to be snow before. Not just on Everest, other mountains are also losing their snow and ice. It is worrying," Sherpa told AFP.

Himalayan glaciers are a critical water source for nearly two billion people living around the mountains and river valleys below.

They feed 10 of the world's most important river systems and also help supply billions of people with food and energy. The water-related impacts of climate change are already experienced daily by millions of people worldwide, according to UN climate scientists.

## Delimitation panel proposes sweeping changes in Kashmir

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** The Delimitation Commission has proposed an overhaul of Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir in its draft report which has been handed over to five associate members from the Union Territory for their suggestions, officials said Saturday.

The voluminous report has proposed redrawing of the Anantnag Parliamentary seat by including Rajouri and Poonch from the Jammu region, besides carrying out massive changes in the Kashmir division, they said.

Many of the assembly seats in erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state have vanished that include Habba Kadal, a seat that was seen as a traditional bastion of migrant Kashmiri pandits. **More on P7**

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	27.0°C	27.8°C
MIN	15.0°C	16.0°C
Humidity	98%	87%
Rainfall	NIL	NIL

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky





## ZENDAYA'S EUPHORIA GETS NOD FOR THIRD SEASON

Zendaya - starrer teen drama *Euphoria* has been greenlit for a third season at HBO. The show, based on an Israeli miniseries of the same name, is a big success. It enjoys an overwhelming social media traction but also generates buzz on a weekly basis as the season progresses.

## RACHEL ZEGLER DIDN'T EXPECT TO LAND SNOW WHITE ROLE

Actress Rachel Zegler has revealed that she was never expecting to land the role of *Snow White* in Disney's live-action remake of the classic story. The 20-year-old actress will play the titular role of the iconic fairytale.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
If you are in the mood to be alone, go ahead and indulge, says Ganesh. No need for friends and no need for music. Rush to the outskirts and mingle with nature. If you deal in money matters, says Ganesh, there may be some money coming your way.

**TAURUS**  
You will notice significant development in your business dealings, predicts Ganesh. Your progress may slow down in the afternoon. Later in the day, financial opportunities will knock at your door. You will also make worthwhile progress in relationship matters, predicts Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
A marathon brainstorming session with your colleagues, a scamper for meeting deadlines, and a demanding spouse will leave you quite stressed out by the end of the day. You, however, are an expert in dividing time between business, home and pleasure.

**CANCER**  
This is your big moment. You are going to deal with a huge amount of money – the kind of amount you would want to fill your swimming pool with and swim in it. Statutory warning issued by Ganesh: Don't dive in it, for you may hurt yourself as something or someone is likely to pull the plug, draining out most of the wealth that was amassed overnight.

**LEO**  
Shooting off the charts is an understatement when it comes to your liveliness today, says Ganesh. Guess there is just something about today that puts a spring in your step and a smile on your face. But whatever it is, it's good for you. At work, you shall be able to bring about new and successful business strategies.

**VIRGO**  
Partnership deals and money spinning will occupy most of your time as business and work top your priority list, predicts Ganesh. You will face stiff competition and animosity at various levels throughout the day. In the evening, your chances of winning are very bright in cut-throat business competitions.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh predicts a captivating day for you in terms of career. At work, you tend to do the tasks assigned to you with amazing clarity. Later in the day, whatever you say will charm a member of the opposite sex, which comes as a pleasant surprise to you. But beware, says Ganesh, as your outlook may cast a shadow on your thoughts in the evening.

**SCORPIO**  
Work may pile up today unless you work extremely hard to meet your targets, says Ganesh. In business, you may be disappointed with the results you achieve and that may be the cause of anxiety and worry. Support may come in the form of love and affection from a dear one in the evening.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Spirituality may overwhelm every other state of your being today, feels Ganesh. Unavoidable expenses may also be on the cards where you must ensure you get the value for your money. Besides an odd shopping spree or some light socialising with friends and family, you are inclined to visit a holy shrine today in quest of spiritual peace, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
It's your lucky day. You can look forward to an exciting time, both with your sweetheart and at work, says Ganesh. A few unexpected, but rather pleasant, events will keep you amused throughout, but there may be more surprises in store even as the day comes to an end.

**AQUARIUS**  
Success ahoj! Go on, challenge your friends to a game; or your adversaries to a deadline. Today is your day, says Ganesh. Your image too gets a makeover due to your superhero antics! Enjoy it while it lasts, and before the wheels turn once again.

**PISCES**  
Not the best of days for you, haunted as you will be by feelings of insecurity. However, do not be in too much of a hurry to get in the mood to grieve, for the evening brings you pleasant times in the company of your soul mate, says Ganesh.

# Ileana talks about body positivity

**Mumbai:** Actress Ileana D'Cruz shared a picture of herself in a red bikini and has talked about body positivity as she says she is celebrating every inch and curve.

Ileana posted the picture of herself on Instagram, where she is seen flaunting her curves. She even talked about how she deleted applications which make one look 'toned' and 'slimmer'.

The actress wrote alongside the powerful picture: "So easy to get sucked into apps that get you alter body so effortlessly to make you look 'slimmer', 'more toned' etc etc. Proud of the fact that I've deleted those apps and chosen this instead."

"This is me and I am celebrating every inch, every curve, all of me."

Ileana will next be seen in *Unfair N Lovely*, a comic take on India's obsession with fair skin. The film is set against the backdrop of Haryana and features Ileana opposite Randeep Hooda.

She also has a film with Indian-American sensation Sandil Ramamurthy, Vidya Balan and Pratik Gandhi. It is a romantic comedy-drama film.



# 'Salman used to avoid dancing'



**Mumbai:** Veteran actress Ayesha Jhulka has shared how superstar Salman Khan used to avoid dancing in films in the 1990s during her appearance on reality show *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*.

Actresses Ayesha Jhulka and Madhoo Shah will appear as special guests on *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* during the Top 8 contestants special episode.

While each contestant impressed the 90s divas through their performances, it was Madhoo and Ayesha's candid confessions that grabbed everyone's attention.

During the shoot, host Aditya Narayan made them play a fun quiz, and during the game, Ayesha revealed how Salman Khan was very conscious about dancing in his initial movies. In fact, in her debut movie - *Kurbaan*, Salman used to ask the choreographer not to give him any steps.

"I am surprised to see that he dances now. He dances so well and even keeps all his steps in mind. Having seen this side of him now, I feel that he used to do drama earlier and he can genuinely dance well," said the Dalal actress.

File photo of Salman and Ayesha



# Self-love a huge priority: Isha

**Mumbai:** Actress Isha Koppikar Narang will be taking time off from her busy schedule to engage in self love this Valentine's Day. She says it is a huge priority.

The Qayamat actress said: "Self Love is a huge priority and this valentine's, I am going to do that. I have so many things and people to care for: If I am not at my best and don't care for myself, I would be burnt out and won't be able to help those that I am accountable for."

"One needs to love and celebrate oneself first. We always care for others but what we neglect is to look after our well being as well. There is no one else that we should depend on for that."

The actress, who has worked in films such as *Krishna Cottage* and *Ek Vivaaha Aisa Bhi*, says she would try to do some detox and allow her energies to rejuvenate and reflect a bit.

# No let-up in K-drama craze

**KOREAN 12-EPIISODE SERIES ALL OF US ARE DEAD HAS CLIMBED TO NO.1 ON NETFLIX'S US DAILY TOP 10 LIST**

**Los Angeles:** Four months ago, *Squid Game* climbed to No. 1 on Netflix's US daily Top 10 list on its way to becoming the streamer's most watched original series ever.

Now, the Korean zombie drama, *All of Us Are Dead*, has accomplished the feat, according to *Deadline*. This makes Korea the first country to place multiple non-English language series on top of Netflix's US daily Top 10, making it the most sought-after supplier of local content.

*All of Us Are Dead*, which rose to No. 1 in its seventh day of release versus Day 4 for *Squid Game*, clearly rode on the latter's coattails, benefitting from the skyrocketing interest in Korean dramas, reports *Deadline*.

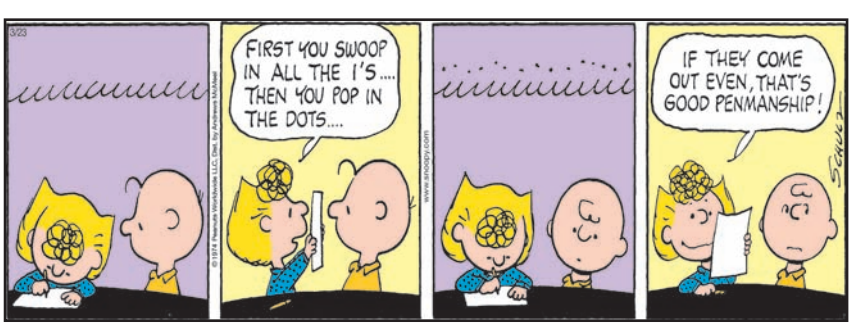
"But the one-two punch of *Squid Game* and *All of Us Are Dead* did not come out of nowhere. There had been a rapid build-up of interest in K-dramas on Netflix, with the US viewership jumping by over 200 per cent between



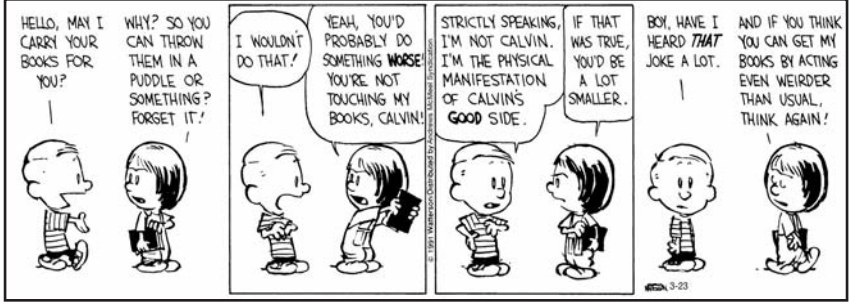
2019 and 2021," says the entertainment news website.

The 12-episode *All of Us Are Dead* follows a group of students trapped in a high school who find themselves in dire situations as they seek to be rescued from a zombie invasion of their school.

### PEANUTS



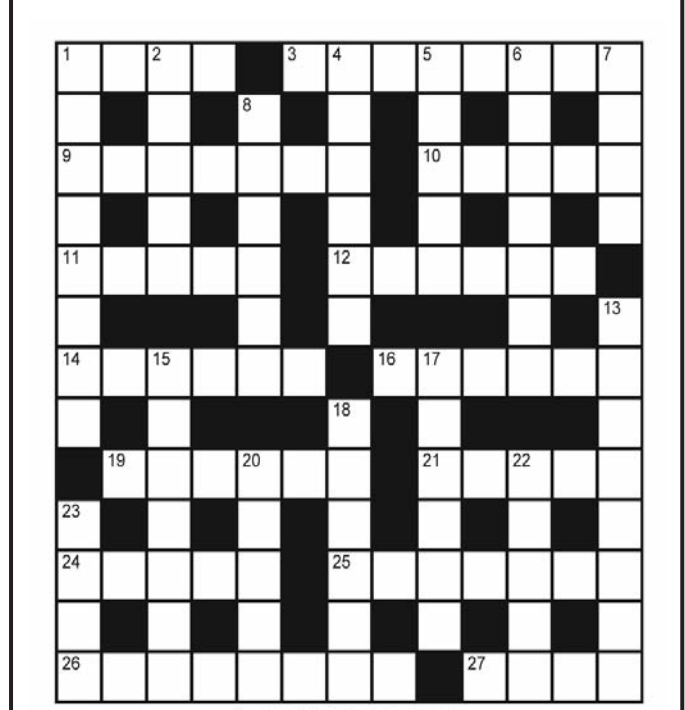
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



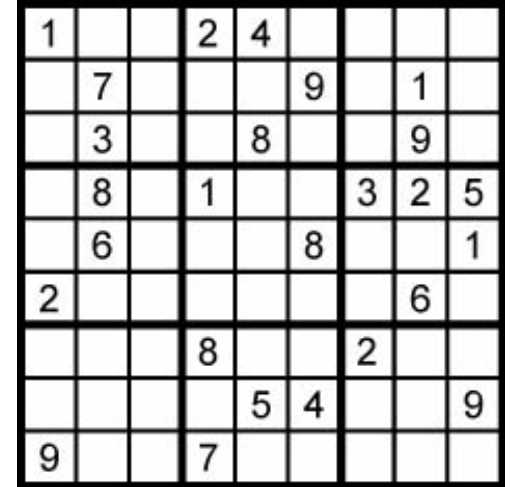
### FUN post CROSSWORD



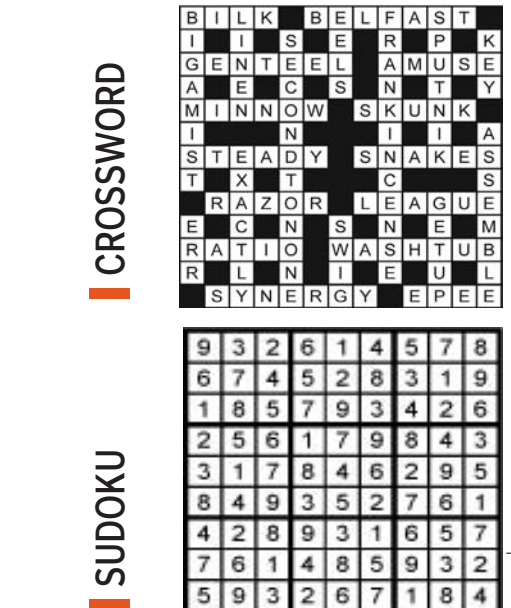
- Across**
- 1 Beer buy
  - 3 Winter melon
  - 9 Trinkets
  - 10 Grammar topic
  - 11 Macaroni shape
  - 12 Happenings
  - 14 Receive willingly
  - 16 Spigot
  - 19 American elk
  - 21 Acquired relative (2-3)
  - 24 Can't stand
  - 25 Sneak peek
  - 26 Museum custodians
  - 27 Like a crone
  - Down**
  - 1 Ski resort feature (5,3)
  - 2 Young pigeon
  - 4 Bluepoint
  - 5 Give the slip
  - 6 Severe
  - 7 Blubber
  - 8 Enlarged photo
  - 13 Non-ticket holder on a ship?
  - 15 Book part
  - 17 Comments to the audience
  - 18 Small fry
  - 20 Atlas feature
  - 22 Prevaricator's forte
  - 23 Trendy

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



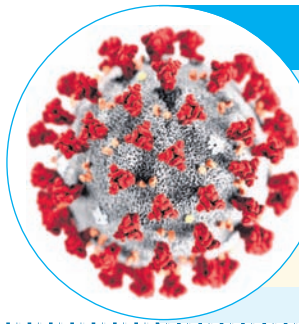
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





## AUSPICIOUS DAY

Children start learning alphabet on the occasion of Saraswati puja in Cuttack, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	39,21,65,541	31,08,54,544	57,46,316
India	4,20,80,664	4,02,47,902	5,01,114
Odisha	12,64,705	12,28,976	8,711

## CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION POLLS

# Parties begin hunt for right faces

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Feb 5:** Political atmosphere in the Silver City has heated up with the notification of the final reservation list for the mayor and corporator posts for the civic body election, which is likely to be conducted anytime around April this year.

The mayor's post for Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has been declared unreserved while 33 wards of the total 59 in the city have been reserved for various sections for the civic body poll, sources said.

The three major political parties in state—the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress—have initiated a process to select suitable candidates for the election. They have also intensified their organisational work in almost all wards of the city to win the mayor and a majority of corporator posts, sources added.

The ruling BJD, which had formed the council in the city in the last two civic body polls, is making all-out efforts to score a hat-trick by winning this year's civic body election.

On the other hand, the BJP is hopeful of doing well in this election, which is being considered very crucial ahead of the 2024 Assembly elections. The Congress party is also trying its best to raise its tally in the urban polls.

There are multiple aspirants for the mayor and corporators' posts in the three major parties. These aspirants may fight the election as independent candidates if they fail to get tickets from their respective parties, sources said.

The independent candidates may queer the pitch for the official nominees of the three major parties.



BJP leader Lalatendu Badu, however, said the saffron party has formed separate committees for poll management in each ward. "The state leadership of the party will select the candidates after consulting our workers from each ward. There is no chance of any revolt or infighting in our party over ticket distribution," he added.

Cuttack city Congress president Giribala Behera said her party is fully prepared for the urban polls.



**Our government has taken up many development works for the people of this city. We will recommend the names of two-three aspirants from each ward to the party president after due consultation with our workers and well-wishers. The party leadership will take a call on the final candidates**

SUBHASH SINGH | BJD LEADER



**The state leadership of the party will select the candidates after consulting our workers from each ward. There is no chance of any revolt or infighting in our party over ticket distribution**

LALATENDU BADU | BJP LEADER



**We have taken several steps to strengthen our organisation in each ward of the city. The party will field appropriate candidates for all 59 wards. We are quite sure that our candidates will win from a majority of wards and we will form the council**

GIRIBALA BEHERA | CONGRESS LEADER

ties. So, the parties will face a tough situation to select candidates for the civic body election. They have to mollify the dissidents and make sure that the aspirants, who have been denied party tickets, must not fight the election as independent nominees, said a political observer.

"We have a very good organisation in Cuttack. Our government

has taken up many development works for the people of this city. We will recommend the names of two-three aspirants from each ward to the party president after due consultation with our workers and well-wishers. The party leadership will take a call on the final candidates. Our workers will happily accept the decision," said BJD leader Subhash Singh.

"We have taken several steps to strengthen our organisation in each ward of the city. The party will field appropriate candidates for all 59 wards. We are quite sure that our candidates will win from a majority of wards and we will form the council. The people have lost their faith in the BJD government and BJP government at the Centre," she added.

## SUBDUED FESTIVAL

The capital city witnessed a muted Saraswati puja due to the restrictions imposed for the Covid-19 pandemic. Educational institutes observed the festival with Covid protocol



Students of Utkal University observe Saraswati puja at the main gate of the varsity in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. (Bottom) The festival being celebrated at Capital High School

# Bangalore police arrest techies in job fraud case



The three accused in police custody

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 5:** The Bangalore police with the help of commissionerate police have arrested three software engineers in the city for allegedly duping several job aspirants of lakhs of rupees on the pretext of providing them employment in global tech giant IBM in Karnataka. Two out of the three accused belong to Odisha while another hails from Maharashtra. The accused were identified as

Abhisekh Mohanty, 22, of Ichhapur under Balikuda police limits in Jagatsinghpur, Kaliprasad Rath, 35, of Sishu Vihar area in Patia under Chandrasekharpur police limits and Abhijit Arun Netake, 33, of Wagholi area in Pune district of Maharashtra.

Sources claimed that the trio who used to work reportedly in a job consultancy firm in Bangalore city had reportedly collected more than Rs 20 lakh from 70 youths in 2019 and 2020 promising the aspi-

rants to provide them employment in the IBM's office in Manyata Tech Park in Bangalore. The accused along with other members of the consultancy firm gave the victims fake job offers with fake logo of IBM and signatures of its human resources department officials.

However, the aspirants were shocked to know that they had been cheated when they went to the IBM office and came to know that all the offer letters and signatures were fake. Later, the IBM authorities lodged a case (5/22) at the Sampigehalli police station in Bangalore city over the issue.

The accused have fled to Odisha and have been staying in the city for last two years. They have started a logistics firm at Chandrasekharpur area. The Bangalore police team Saturday produced the accused before the court that granted them permission to take the accused on a transit remand for further probe.

# Puja celebrated with limited participation



Saraswati puja at Unit II Girls' High School in Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 5:** The capital city Saturday observed Saraswati Puja in strict adherence to Covid guidelines with educational institutes witnessing a limited number of participation. The festival, coupled with wedding season, revived the business

of local traders to some extent, sources said.

The state government prohibited the community celebrations of Saraswati Puja to check the spread of Covid-19 infection.

As per the guidelines, people were advised to perform the rituals of Saraswati Puja at home with family members by avoid-

ing mass gatherings. They were also asked to adhere to the Covid-19 restrictions such as physical distancing, use of face masks/ covering and handwashing.

The educational institutes across the city witnessed limited number of students and staff members participating in the festival. Notably, the state government has allowed

colleges, universities, technical and professional institutes to reopen for students February 7.

However, the festival along with the wedding season brought some cheers to the vendors of the city who were facing a slump in their business due to the third wave of the pandemic.

"The demand for fruits and flowers went up in past 10-15 days. I have managed to get some profits due to the festival season. However, our business is yet to touch the pre-Covid level," said Papu Puhan, a fruit and flower vendor at Bomikhal.

Similarly, artisans, who were struggling a lot due to the prohibition on public celebration of Durga Puja and other festivals, also witnessed a surge in demand for clay idols for Saraswati puja.

"Students and authorities of educational institutes purchased Saraswati idols in large numbers this year. We are expecting that Durga Puja and all other festivals will be celebrated with pump and gaiety this year," said Sabyasachi Kundu, an idol maker at Rajmahal Square.

# Mahanadi tribunal puts off hearing to February 12

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** The Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal Saturday deferred the hearing in pleas filed by Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the sharing of Mahanadi river water to February 12.

A three-judge bench of the tribunal headed by Supreme Court judge Justice AM Khanwilkar and comprising Justices Rabi Ranjan and Indermeet Kaur deferred the hearing to February 12 on the request Chhattisgarh as several members of the legal team of Chhattisgarh have been affected with the Covid-19.

Earlier, the tribunal had directed both Odisha and Chhattisgarh to submit list of witnesses in connection with Mahanadi river water dispute.

It is to be mentioned here that Odisha and Chhattisgarh have filed petitions in the Mahanadi water dispute tribunal in respect to shar-



ing of Mahanadi river water.

Odisha in its petition claimed that the state of Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river obstructing the water flow to Odisha. Odisha has sought stay on the construction and operation of barrages being built on the Mahanadi river and also for maintaining specific flow of water during the non-monsoon months, November to May.

# Symptoms appear in 2 days after virus exposure: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**London, Feb 5:** Symptoms of Covid-19 infection appear in 42 hours after being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 virus, much earlier than previously thought, finds a study.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Covid symptoms take around five to six days to appear after infection.

But the study led by Imperial College London researchers showed that symptoms start to develop very fast, on average about two days after contact with the virus.

The infection first appears in the throat; infectious virus peaks about five days into the infection and at that stage it is significantly more abundant in the nose than the throat.

The findings published on a pre-print server and not yet peer-reviewed also showed that the virus was detected first in the throat, significantly earlier than in the nose (40 hours in the throat compared to 58 hours in the nose). The levels were lower and peaked

sooner in the throat.

Peak levels of virus were significantly higher in the nose than in the throat, indicating a potentially greater risk of virus being shed from the nose than the mouth.

This highlights the importance of proper face mask use to cover both the mouth and nose, the researchers said.

The team also found that lateral flow tests (LFTs) are a reassuringly reliable indicator of whether infectious virus is present (that is, whether they are likely to be able to transmit virus to other people).

However, the LFT tests were less effective in picking up lower levels of virus at the very start and end of the infection.

"Our study reveals some very interesting clinical insights, particularly around the short incubation period of the virus, extremely high viral shedding from the nose as well as the utility of lateral flow tests with potential implications for public health," said Christopher Chiu, Department of Infectious Disease and the Institute



## NEW FINDINGS

ACCORDING TO THE WHO, COVID SYMPTOMS TAKE AROUND FIVE TO SIX DAYS TO APPEAR AFTER INFECTION

But the study led by Imperial College London researchers showed that symptoms start to develop very fast, on average about two days after contact with the virus

Peak levels of virus were significantly higher in the nose than in the throat, indicating a potentially greater risk of virus being shed from the nose than the mouth

This highlights the importance of proper face mask use to cover both the mouth and nose, the researchers said

of Infection at Imperial College. The study is based on 36 healthy male and female volunteers aged 18-30 years, unvaccinated against

Covid-19 and with no prior infection with SARS-CoV-2.

Participants were exposed to the lowest possible dose of virus found to cause infection, roughly equivalent to the amount found in a single droplet of nasal fluid.

Among the 18 infected participants, the average time from first exposure to the virus to viral detection and early symptoms (incubation period) was 42 hours, significantly shorter than existing estimates, which put the average incubation period at five to six days.

Following this period there was a steep rise in the amount of virus (viral load) found in swabs taken from participants' nose or throat.

These levels peaked at around five days into infection on average, but high levels of viable (infectious) virus were still picked up in lab tests up to nine days after inoculation on average, and up to a maximum of 12 days for some, supporting the isolation periods advocated in most guidelines.



# State logs 22 more Covid deaths, slight dip in TPR



Khurda reported seven Covid deaths, including four in Bhubaneswar, while Cuttack and Sundargarh reported three deaths each

While Keonjhar district logged two Covid casualties, one death each were reported from Balasore, Boudh, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Nabarangpur, Nayagarh and Subarnapur districts

So far, the number of deaths due to comorbidities in the state remains at fifty-three

PNN/ AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 5:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally rose to 12,64,705 Saturday as 2,603 more people tested positive for the infection, while 22 fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 8,711, a Health department bulletin said.

It is the lowest single-day spike since January 6. The daily cases plunged by 46 per cent from 4,842 a week ago. The state had registered 2,697 cases Friday.

Out of total 2,603 new infections, 1,521 were reported from quarantine centres while 1,082 persons contracted the virus locally.

The state's daily test positivity rate (TPR) slightly dipped to 4.13 per cent from 4.44 per cent on the previous day as 63,045 samples were tested for Covid-19 in the last 24 hours.

Khurda district, of which state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, re-

ported the highest number of 444 cases. It was followed by Cuttack with 205 new infections. A total of 349 children were among the 2,603 new patients in the state.

The coastal state also reported 22 fatalities, as per a tweet of the state Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department posted Saturday morning. The state had reported 23 Covid-19 fatalities Friday.

Khurda reported seven Covid deaths, including four in Bhubaneswar, while Cuttack and Sundargarh reported three deaths each. Fifty-three patients have died due to comorbidities so far. While Keonjhar district logged two Covid casualties, one death each were reported from Balasore, Boudh, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Nabarangpur, Nayagarh and Subarnapur districts.

The state now has 26,965 ac-

tive cases, while 12,28,976 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 6,109 in the last 24 hours, it added.

Other districts that reported fresh Covid-19 cases are: Angul (102), Balasore (48), Bargarh (51), Bhadrak (37), Bolangir (60), Boudh (37), Deogarh (21), Dhenkanal (64), Gajapati (64), Ganjam (85), Jagatsinghpur (60), Jajpur (133), Jharsuguda (57), Kalahandi (60), Kandhamal (26), Kendrapara (63), Keonjhar (43), Koraput (94), Malkangiri (19), Mayurbhanj (104), Nabarangpur (62), Nayagarh (67), Nuapada (87), Puri (41), Rayagada (61), Sambalpur (88), Subarnapur (16) and Sundargarh (204).

The State Pool reported 100 new cases. These are persons who have come from outside of Odisha and have tested positive. A total of 2,79,36,031 swab samples have been cumulatively tested so far.



Srimandir priests consecrate three logs for their use in construction of chariots for this year's Rath Yatra in Puri, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## 'Infra for Paradip Plastic Park almost ready'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 5:** The work related to development of physical infrastructure for the proposed Plastic Park at Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district is almost completed, said Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in Lok Sabha recently.

The plastic park at Paradip was approved in 2013 for a project cost of Rs 106.78 crore out of which Rs 40 crore was approved as grant-in-aid by the Centre, he said.

The minister said that the proj-

ect was supposed to be completed within three years and now physical development is almost complete.

He said the Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals implements the scheme for setting up of plastic parks with an aim to develop an ecosystem with state-of-the-art infrastructure building and enabling common facilities through a cluster development approach to consolidate and synergize the capacities of the domestic downstream plastic processing industry.

Under the scheme, the Centre provides grant funding up to 50 per

cent of the project cost, subject to a ceiling of Rs 40 crore for each project. The remaining project cost is to be funded by the state government, beneficiary industries and loan from financial institutions.

Once approved, the project is implemented through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) formed by the state government. The SPV allots lands to entrepreneurs, provides necessary project related clearances and makes all efforts to attract plastic processing industries to set up their units in the plastic park, he informed.

So far, ten plastic parks including the one at Paradip have been approved. In March last year, a MoU was signed between Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (Idco) for development of the Paradip Plastic Park. The plastic park is being developed over an area of 120 acres.

It is estimated that around 26 units will come up at the plastic park with an estimated investment of ₹500 crores and is likely to generate direct and indirect employment of 6,000.

## AM/NS India's Covid awareness drive in Sundargarh, Keonjhar



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 5:** ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) has kick started its Covid-19 Awareness Campaign Vehicle at Koira in Sundargarh district and Barbil in Keonjhar district to encourage people to adopt Covid appropriate behaviour and to contain the spread of the deadly novel corona virus.

Koira Block Development Officer Pallavi Raj flagged off the Covid Awareness Vehicle at Koira and Barbil Municipality Executive Officer Abhishek Panda flagged off the Covid Awareness Vehicle at Community Health Centre (CHC) in Barbil, in presence of AM/NS India officials.

Fruits and N-95 masks were also distributed after the inauguration at CHC, Barbil.

To create awareness on Covid-19 and to sensitise community on social distancing and other Covid-19 protocols, the vehicle will travel 15 villages in Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts in ten days.

This mobilisation drive will focus on creating awareness among people through distribution of Information Education Communication (IEC) materials and audio announcements.

AM/NS India is a joint venture between ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel, two of the world's leading steel manufacturing organisations. A leading integrated flat carbon steel producer in India, the company has an achievable annual crude steel capacity of about 9 million tonnes.

It produces a diversified range of flat steel products, including value-added steel, and has a pellet capacity of 14 million tonnes, with another 6 million tonnes capacity expansion in the pipeline.

## TRANSFER SEASON



Several BJP and Congress workers from Keonjhar district switch to BJD at the party's office in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

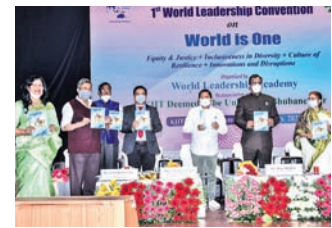
## 1st world leadership prog in KIIT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 5:** The first world leadership convention on 'World is One' was organised by World Leadership Academy (WLA) in association with KIIT Deemed to be University Saturday.

Speaking at the convention, former Union minister of education Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said India was the world leader in ancient times, and it will again lead the world in the 21st century.

"India has a rich culture, heritage, literature, history, and values. People from all over the world came here to get knowledge. At that time, we had world-famous institutions like Takshila and Nalanda. India believes in 'Vasudeva Kutumbakam' policy - it is the Indian culture. We see the entire world as a family. The World Leadership Academy will act as a platform to create leaders in various sectors from culture, heritage to science and technology," he stated.



Inaugurating the convention, noted thinker and writer Ram Madhav said, the world is one from the perspective of geology, sociology and other branches of knowledge. While the 'world is one' is a piece of common knowledge, wisdom is needed to keep it one, he stated.

"Educational institutions should not be factories of degrees and certificates. The real purpose of education is to impart wisdom and values. We need people who can keep the world one and keep humanity going on. Educational institutions should not only prepare students to earn their livelihood, but

also inculcate human values which can transform their lives," Madhav added.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Achyuta Samanta, founder, KIIT & KISS, said, KIIT is based on humanity and compassion since its inception. It practices the core values of humanity and compassion in the true sense, he stated.

Prof KK Aggarwal, chairperson, National Board of Accreditation (NBA) said, knowledge is one; so the 'world is one' should be always in our thought process.

Earlier, in her welcome address, Prof Sasmita Rani Samanta, VC, KIIT-DU & President, WLA said, World Leadership Academy (WLA) is established to bring people, culture, ideas, technologies, teachers, students, researchers, investors, innovators together who are committed to transforming the world for the establishment of peace, justice, and sustainable development.

## INACTION FOR INUNDATION

# Rising global temperatures up river basins' flood risk

**EXPERTS BELIEVE CLIMATE CHANGE IS LEADING TO MORE FREQUENT LARGE FLOODS, THE LIKES OF WHICH HAVE STRUCK PARTS OF BRITAIN, GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRALIA AND CHINA IN RECENT YEARS, DUE TO RECORD-BREAKING OR HEAVY, SUSTAINED RAINFALL**

temperatures, according to a new research.

The study from the University of East Anglia (UEA) shows even a modest temperature increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius will spell significant risks for parts of India, China, Ethiopia, Ghana, Brazil and Egypt. The findings are published in the journal Climatic Change.

The team looked at fluvial flood risks for six global warming levels between 1.5 and 4 degrees Celsius by 2100.

The study examined six countries all considered to be vulnerable to climate change, selected from different continents, spanning different levels of development and ranging considerably in size.

Daily time series of precipitation, temperature and monthly potential evapotranspiration were generated by combining monthly observations, daily reanalysis data, and projected changes in the five CMIP5 (Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5, Global Climate Models).



Erfstadt, Germany

THESE SERIES WERE THEN USED TO DRIVE THE HYDROLOGICAL AND HYDRODYNAMIC MODELS TO SIMULATE RIVER DISCHARGE AND FLOOD INUNDATION

These series were then used to drive the hydrological and hydrodynamic models to simulate river discharge and flood inundation.

"Our results indicate that return periods of one-in-100-year

floods in the late 20th century are likely to decrease with warming, meaning an increased number of people will be exposed to flood risks, particularly with 4 degrees Celsius warming," said Yi He,

### ROADMAP

The study examined six countries all considered to be vulnerable to climate change, selected from different continents, spanning different levels of development and ranging considerably in size

Daily time series of precipitation, temperature and monthly potential evapotranspiration were generated by combining monthly observations, daily reanalysis data, and projected changes in the five CMIP5 (Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5, Global Climate Models)

Associate Professor in UEA's School of Environmental Sciences.

"Exposure in the major river basin areas in the six countries increases significantly, ranging from a doubling in China to more

than 50-fold in Egypt. Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius would decrease the risks, resulting in increases ranging from 12 per cent in China to around 13-fold in Egypt," he added.

A one-in-100-year flood event is defined as an event of a size that will be equalled or exceeded on average once every 100 years. That is, over a period of 1,000 years, a one-in-100-year event would expect to be equalled or exceeded ten times.

However, that doesn't mean such floods only occur at that frequency, and experts believe climate change is leading to more frequent large floods, the likes of which have struck parts of Britain, Germany, the United States, Australia and China in recent years, due to record-breaking or heavy, sustained rainfall.

With global warming heating the oceans and the atmosphere, the hydrological cycle intensifies. With the atmosphere holding more water as temperatures rise, researchers expect increasingly intense and sustained rainfall events. IANS

## FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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-Cookiemann-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.



SHORT TAKES

SARISUA HILL

# Mineral loot rampant as admin busy in polls

Sec-144 has been clamped in 97 stone mines on Sarisua and adjoining hills following a direction by the NGT. As many as 50 mines have been shown closed in official records but are operating illegally



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khaira, Feb 5:** With dates for three-tier panchayat polls drawing closer, loot of mineral minerals like black stone, laterite stone and murrum from Sarisua hill and adjoining government land under Khaira tehsil in Balasore district has increased manifold as revenue officials are preoccupied with electoral responsibilities. It is alleged that the theft of the minor minerals has increased by 10 times and mafia are smuggling minerals to various destinations in exchange for a premium. Moreover, to avoid raids on Sora-Kupari and Kupari-Ranaroad, the stone mafias are taking a detour by Kadaligadia-Kaptipada hilly road to smuggle the minerals to neighbouring Mayurbhanj and other districts. Environmentalists and nature lovers fear that if the administration hesitates to

- It is alleged that the theft of the minor minerals has increased by 10 times
- A number of miners, who had applied to get lease of the mines three years back, are yet to be given lease of any of the mines
- Locals alleged that only a handful of miners are involved in illegal mining from the hills

take steps then the Sarisua and other hills in the area will turn into barren land by the time elections are over. Reports said that the administration has clamped Section-144 in 97 stone mines on Sarisua and adjoining hills following a direction by the National Green Tribunal. As many as 50 mines have been shown closed in official records but they are operating illegally. As a result, the state government is losing precious revenue worth several crores. The revenue which could have

come into the government exchequer is going into the pockets of the mineral smugglers. On the other hand, many of the miners who had applied to get lease of the mines three years back are yet to be given lease of any of the mines. As a result, their security money to the tune of crores is lying with the government without actually giving lease of the mines to the applicants. It is alleged that only a handful of miners are involved in illegal mining from the hills. This has sparked sharp resentment among the bonafide applicants who are yet to get lease of the mines. Sources said that the illegal miners have stocked the illegally extracted stones near Bageipur at the foothills. The silence of the revenue officials has surprised many. Earlier, officials of the level of sub-collector and senior district officials used to visit the quarries and crusher units and penalise the miners over irregularities. However, their absence for a long time has only emboldened the illegal miners to carry out theft and smuggling of minor minerals with impunity. This is indicative of the stagnation gripping the administrative system. The villagers on the foothill have alleged that hills could be saved if the administration spares some time to nab the mineral smugglers. When contacted, Mahendra Prasad Behera, tehsildar said that he will soon visit Bageipur and conduct a probe on theft of minor minerals.

**Minor girl dies of Covid**  
**Daringbadi:** A minor girl studying in Class-X died of Covid-19 in this block of Kandhamal district, Saturday. The incident is the first death case in the area during the ongoing third wave of the pandemic. As she was suffering from anaemia and several other ailments, she was first admitted to Daringbadi hospital and later shifted to the Covid Care Centre of the district headquarters hospital after she tested positive for Covid-19. Immediately after her death, the body was brought to Daringbadi and cremated on the basis of Covid guidelines in the presence of BDO Gadadhar Patra, tehsildar Charles Nayak, police officials and family members.

**Youth held for molestation**  
**Berhampur:** Police Saturday arrested a youth on charge of molesting a girl student over one-sided love affair with the latter. The accused was identified as Rizun Khan of Somanath Nagar area under Town police limits. He was produced in court and remanded to judicial custody by SDJM Jeetendriya Panigrahi. Police also recorded the statement of the survivor in court. Later, police rehabilitated the survivor at a short-stay home in Utkal Balashram after she refused to go back to her parents. Police said that the accused was in one-sided love with the girl and often used to harass and make obscene gestures at her. The girl was walking by the road Thursday when Rizun waylaid her and molested her. Later, the girl's mother lodged a complaint against the accused at Sadar police station leading to his arrest.

DHABALAGIRI DDM OFFICE IN FOCUS

## Important files burnt to hush up irregularities

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, Feb 5:** Scores of important official files were allegedly set ablaze behind the office of Deputy Director (Mines) located at Dhabalagiri of Jajpur Road in this district with an intention to hide corruption in the department, a source informed Saturday. According to the source, an official in the Deputy Director (Mines) Office had engaged two peons in the work that lasted for two hours. A heap of ashes was found behind the office after the files were burnt in order to eliminate all evidences, of corruption, it was said. Meanwhile, a local social activist named Dushmant Kumar Rout has tweeted to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in this regard and sought an enquiry into the incident. He also informed about it to state Vigilance Directorate in

Cuttack, Mines department and Jajpur Collector. Allegations of irregularity are often being raised against the DDM office in Dhabalagiri. There is a very high possibility that several mining and transport firms can be conveniently favoured. These files might have vital information about illegal dealings with firms. Some officials in the DDM office allegedly receive regular cuts from mining companies in Jajpur. It was proved to be true by an email earlier sent by a senior manager of a mining company in 2020. Officials apprehended a probe on corruption in the days to come and destroyed files, it was alleged. However, DDM Priyadarshi Sandeep Kumar Bal said, "Some unwanted files were burnt for safety after a poisonous snake was recently entered the office." He denied any corruption in the office.

Showcause for six Ganjam teachers

**Chhatrapur:** Following a directive from the district education officer, show cause notices were served to two headmasters and four teachers on charges of dereliction of duty in Bhanjanagar area of Ganjam district. Besides, their salaries for a day each have been stopped. The errant teachers have been asked to submit their replies in three days and in case of failure, action will be taken against them, the block education officer stated. According to reports, the block education officer while visiting schools February 3 found that the headmaster and assistant teacher of Galeri Ex-Board primary school were absent from school. The BEO found that teachers had not prepared students' specific action plan for online and offline classes, doubt clearing sessions. Four other teachers of different schools have also been served show cause notices in this regard.

Royal era pond needs restoration

**Kuamara:** Krushnasagar, a sprawling pond dug by royals decades ago near Kuamara and Chilima villages under Gopabandhanagar block of Mayurbhanj district, is gradually losing its existence for lack of renovation. Locals have demanded immediate steps for its renovation. People of Kuamara, Chilima and Agarpada usually depend on the four-acre pond for the purpose of drinking and bathing. "The pond has been choked with silt and wild weed. The administration and elected members of the panchayat have allegedly failed to think of the pond's renovation and desilting," locals said. Earlier, farmers used to raise crops by using its water. Over years, the pond has lost its water retaining capacity. If the pond is renovated, it could be of good use for irrigation and fish farming, locals observed.

# Farmers grapple with water woes

POST NEWS NETWORK

AGRARIAN CRISIS IN KENDRAPARA

**Kendrapara, Feb 5:** Hundreds of local farmers in Kendrapara vehemently opposed a recent decision of Water Resources department about not releasing water into canals for Rabi crops this year. A delegation of farmers handed over a memorandum in this regard to Kendrapara Additional District Magistrate (ADM). On the other hand, lack of appropriate water management for farming is stated to be the prime issue for the candidates contesting the three-tier panchayat polls. "Local leaders think about our problems only when an election approaches and forget once it is over. Around 36,038 hectare farmlands in high-lying areas in Kendrapara district do not have adequate irrigation facilities. Similarly, inadequate drainage of excess water is a major problem in around 70,333 hectare farmlands," a farmer from Kansar village Niranjan Parida and farmer leader Gayadhar Dhal said. Out of a total of around



75,818 hectare cultivable farmlands, the administration shows 65,032 hectare as irrigated lands. However, the fact is altogether different, they added. Kendrapara district has nine blocks of which Aul, Rajkanika and Rajnagar do not have a single canal. Odisha government had earlier announced that at least 35 per cent of the farmlands in every block will have irrigation facilities. However, the decision is yet to be implemented in the three blocks of Kendrapara. As a result, youths are turning away from agriculture and migrating outside for jobs. A Local Right to Information (RTI) activist Pramod Kumar

Swain said, "As per the district Agriculture department sources, Mahakalpara block has 28,070 hectare arable farmlands while 6,823 hectare (24.31 per cent) have irrigation facilities." Likewise, Rajnagar block has 25,859 hectare arable farmlands of which 19.16 per cent have irrigation facilities. About 33.62 per cent of farmlands in Rajkanika block are irrigated through Lift Irrigation (LI) points and other sources. A total of 30,681 hectare farmlands are irrigated through 1,114 LI points and 3,063 tube wells. Moreover, 10,624 hectare farmlands are irrigated through other sources, the RTI reply stated.

**A**round 36,038 hectare farmlands in upland areas in Kendrapara district do not have adequate irrigation facilities. The coastal district has nine blocks while Aul, Rajkanika and Rajnagar blocks do not have a single canal.

Water Resources department executive engineer Prabodh Kumar Rout said, "Development of the canals and creek bunds is underway. The department has plans to construct more number of creek bunds and barrages on rivers as well. Therefore, water is not being released into the canals now." Moreover, Gobari, Jambu, Kendrapara and Pattamundai canals have failed to irrigate nearby farmlands as these are filled with weeds (water hyacinth). It is said that the crops in about 55 panchayats get damaged every year due to floods. Poor irrigation and drainage facilities have distracted the youngsters from farming.

## Political violence in Bhadrak; 23 booked

**Basudevpur, Feb 5:** Amid intensified campaign for the upcoming panchayat polls, incidents of political violence were reported from various parts of Bhadrak. Meanwhile, police have registered a case against six persons for their alleged complicity in a case of political violence at Bideipur under Basudevpur block. In another case, 17 people were booked in the same panchayat. Kamalant Nayak, a resident of Bideipur under Kasia marine police limits, filed an FIR alleging that some people had attacked him, Friday, for political bias. Local MLA Bishnubrata Routray Friday had faced stiff opposition from some people while he was campaigning for the party candidates at Bideipur panchayat. He was allegedly detained for some time while some of his supporters were abused. His campaign was affected. Rangadhar Jena, a resident of Bideipur had filed a complaint at a local police station in this regard. Police have registered a case against 17 people involved in the case.

यूनियन बँक Union Bank of India		Regional Office: Cuttack		MEGA E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE	
M-14, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Bhubaneswar - 751003, Ph.: 0674-2537900					
<p><b>SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES</b>  <b>E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of movable / Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002</b></p> <p>Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described movable / immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/ symbolic/ physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor) will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 10.03.2022 between 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM for recovery of outstanding dues to the Union Bank of India from the Borrowers and Guarantors mentioned below. The reserve price and the earnest money deposit is stated in the column respectively.</p>					
Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagees / Co-Applicants / Co-Obligants / Outstanding Dues	Description of Properties to be Auctioned	Reserve Price/ EMD / Bid Increment	Account Details for EMD Submission	
1.	<b>MALGODOWN BRANCH, Mob.: 9398263799/</b> Borrower: Mr. A Shankar Rao, S/o.: Late A Chandri Rao, At: Dewan Bazar, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack - 753001/ Co-Applicants: 1) Mr. Aalika Basu, S/o.: Late A Chandri Rao, 2) Mr. A Mohan Rao, S/o.: Late A Chandri Rao, 3) Ms. Allaka Satyabati, W/o.: Late A Chandri Rao, All are At: Dewan Bazar, Buxi Bazar, Cuttack - 753001/ Outstanding: ₹75,443.38 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building at Khata No.: 179/139, Plot No.: 487/2539, Area: Ac.0.024 Dec., Village/ Mouza: Cuttack Sahar Unit No. 12 Sutahat, PS: Lalbag, Tahasil/Dist.: Cuttack, State: Odisha, PIN - 753001, standing in the name of A Shankar Rao, A Mohan Rao, Allaka Satyabati and Allaka Basu, Bounded by North: Narrow Road, South: Kankam Amayi, East: Golatistiya, West: Own Road	₹36,61,000/- ₹3,66,100/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 022811980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0802280	
2.	<b>MALGODOWN BRANCH, Mob.: 9398263799/</b> 1) M/s. Rita Enterprises, Through its' Prop.: Smt. Rita Behera, 2) Smt. Rita Behera, W/o.: Mr. Bharat Behera, At: Jobra, Malla Sahi, P.O.: College Square, Cuttack, 3) Mr. K. Sanjib Rao, At: Mangalabagh, PO.: Buxi Bazar, Cuttack/ Outstanding: ₹26,12,178.49 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land & Building at Plot No.: 389/1364, Khata No.: 180/30, Cuttack Town, Unit No.: 11, Odvia Bazar, PO.: Buxi Bazar, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-753001, Area: 1089 Sq. fts. standing in the name of Mr. K. Sanjib Rao, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 371, South: Ismaili Road, West: Rest of this plot	₹20,67,000/- ₹2,07,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 022811980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0802280	
3.	<b>ANGUL BRANCH, Mob.: 7978925458/</b> 1) R.P.Associates, Prop.: Mr. Pranay Kumar Mohanty, 2) Mr. Pranay Kumar Mohanty, At: Nigamanand Lane, Similipada, Angul-759122, 3) Mr. Basudev Sahoo, At: 6th Lane, Amlapada, Angul - 759122/ Outstanding: ₹11,97,787.75 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Property consisting of Plot No.: 1078/1881/3096, Khata No.: 542/777, Area: Ac.0.060 Dec., Village: Ranigoda Jungle, P.S.: Angul, Tahasil: Banarpal, Dist.: Angul, standing in the name of Mr. Pranay Kumar Mohanty, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 1882, South: Govt. Road, East: Plot of Mr. Dinabandhu Jena, West: Plot of Mr. Basudev Sahoo	₹3,00,000/- ₹30,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 144321980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0914339	
4.	<b>CUTTACK BUXI BAZAR BRANCH, Mob.: 8904472051/</b> 1) Samita Karmakar, W/o.: Sanjoy Karmakar, 2) Sanjoy Karmakar, S/o.: Ajit Karmakar, Both are At: Naibadya Enclave, Mahidaspur Bazaar, Kazi Bazaar, Chandri Chowk, Cuttack, 3) Rahul Karmakar, S/o.: Sanjoy Karmakar, At: DNO, 3B1/3, Opp. Mahidaspur Bazaar, Kazi Bazaar, Chandri Chowk, Cuttack/ Outstanding: ₹18,77,401/- with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Residential Land and Building belonging to Sanjoy Karmakar, situated at Flat No.: 3B1, 3RD Floor, Naibadya Enclave, corresponding to Khata No.: 601/339, Plot No.: 1836, Cuttack Town, Unit No. 12, Sutahat Mahidaspur Bazar, Cuttack Municipality Ward No.: 11, Cuttack, Odisha, Bounded by East: Open Space, West: Open Space, North: Corridor Flat No.: 1B1, South: Open Space	₹55,00,000/- ₹5,50,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 008711980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0800872	
5.	<b>CUTTACK BUXI BAZAR BRANCH, Mob.: 8904472051/</b> 1) Mrs. Smita Das, W/o.: Mr. Santosh Kumar Mohanty, 2) Mr. Jagat Jiban Mohanty, S/o.: Mr. Santosh Kumar Mohanty, Both are At: Banto, P.O.: Sankarpur, Via/PS.: Choudwar, Dist.: Cuttack -754028, 3) Mr. Santosh Kumar Mohanty, S/o.: Krushna Chandra Mohanty, At: Rajabagicha, PO.: Tala Telenga Bazar, PS.: Purigat, Dist.: Cuttack - 753009/ Outstanding: ₹51,05,308.66 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building at Khata No.: 73/20, 73/30, Plot No.: 147/191 (Area: Ac.0.08 Dec), 149/192 (Area: Ac.0.10 Dec.) & 147/203 (Area: Ac.0.22 Dec.), Mouza: Champadeipur, PS.: Choudwar - 16, Tangi-Choudwar - 32, Dist.: Cuttack - 754028	₹61,60,000/- ₹6,16,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 008711980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0800872	
6.	<b>CUTTACK BUXI BAZAR BRANCH, Mob.: 8904472051/</b> 1) M/s. Chidiyani Pharmaceuticals, Represented by its Prop.: Mr. Jatindra Kumar Behera, At: Tarachand Patana, P.O.: Tala Telenga Bazar, Cuttack, PIN - 753001, 2) Mr. Umesh Chandra Tripathy, S/o.: Late Ratnakar Tripathy, At: Korkor, P.O.: Napanga, PS.: Tangi, Cuttack / Outstanding: ₹26,94,277.74 with further interest, cost & Expenses	1) All that piece and parcel of Land measuring Area: Ac.0.20 Dec., Plot No.: 307/498, Khata No.: 156/80, Mutation Khata No.: 79, Mutation Plot No.: 307/498 situated at Village: Harisanarpur, P.S.: Athagarh-46, Tahasil: Athagarh, Dist.: Cuttack, belonging to Mr. Jatindra Kumar Behera, Bounded by North: Sarat Kumar Dalei, South: Damodar Bank, East: Vendeo Own, West: Health Department, Athagarh, 2) All that part and parcel of property Land measuring Area: Ac. 0.20 dec., Khata No.: 79, Plot No.: 307 situated at Village: Harisanarpur, P.S.: Athagarh-46, Tahasil: Athagarh, Dist.: Cuttack, belonging to Mr. Jatindra Kumar Behera, Bounded by North: Jayanta Kumar Behera, South: Sashi Dei, East: Dhruva Charan Behera, West: Paresh Jagati	₹40,00,000/- ₹4,00,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 008711980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0800872	
7.	<b>JAGATPUR BRANCH, CUTTACK, Mob.: 7735346669/</b> Borrower: M/s. Behera Paints & Hardware, (Prop.: Mr. Nageswar Behera), 2) Mr. Nageswar Behera, S/o.: Mr. Alekha Chandra Behera, At: Narajpur, Jagatpur, Cuttack-754021/ Guarantors: 1) Mr. Alekha Chandra Behera, S/o.: Hari Behera, 2) Golekha Chandra Behera, S/o.: Hari Behera, 3) Alok Kumar Sukla, S/o.: Ashok Sukla, 4) Deepak Sukla, S/o.: Ashok Sukla, 5) Nirupama Sukla, W/o.: Ashok Sukla, All are At: Narajpur, Jagatpur, Cuttack, Odisha - 754021/ Outstanding: ₹60,60,275.71 with further interest, cost & Expenses	1) All that piece and parcel of Residential Land and Building belonging to Nirupama Sukla, Alok Kumar Sukla, Deepak Kumar Sukla, Dist.: Cuttack, SRO: Jagatpur, Tahasil: Tangi, Choudwar, PS.: Tangi No.: 71, Mouza: Nimpur, Mutation Khata No.: 772/1799, Plot No.: 2636/ 6389, Area: Ac.0.040 Dec. and Plot No.: 2634/ 3956, Area: Ac.0.050 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, Total Area: Ac.0.09 Dec. 2) Land and Building belonging to Alekha Behera and Golekha Behera, Dist.: Cuttack, SRO: Jagatpur, Tahasil: Tangi Choudwar, PS.: Jagatpur, Mouza: Kaira, Mutation Khata No.: 492/1346, Plot No.: 904/2104, Area: Ac.0.10 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, Hal Khata No.: 333 of Plot No.: 9024, Area: Ac.0.20 Dec.	₹38,00,000/- ₹3,80,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 177621980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0917761	
8.	<b>JAGATPUR BRANCH, CUTTACK, Mob.: 7735346669/</b> 1) Mr. Kalandi Behera, 2) Mr. Shubham Behera, 3) Ms. Kanchan Behera, 4) Ms. Rajanandini, 5) Ms. Sulochana Behera, At: Nimpur (Jagatpur), Cuttack, Dist.: Cuttack, Odisha - 754025/ Outstanding: ₹77,57,857/- with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of i) EMG of Land and Building situated over Mouza: Nimpur, Tahasil: Tangi Choudwar, PS.: Jagatpur, Cuttack, Khata No.: 772/2131, Plot No.: 2869/6641, Area: Ac.0.025 Dec., Khata No.: 772/1620, Plot No.: 2869/6222, Area: Ac 0.03 Dec. in the name of Kalandi Behera and Jhuni Behera ii) Vacant Land situated at Mouza: Palasa, Tahasil: Tangi Choudwar, PS.: Tangi, Cuttack, Khata No.: 243/193, Plot No.: 644, Area: Ac. 0.24 Dec. in the name of Kalandi Behera	₹1,02,15,000/- ₹10,22,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 177621980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0917761	
9.	<b>DHENKANAL BRANCH, Mob.: 8584884228/</b> 1) Mrs. Kamalini Padhi, W/o.: Late Chaitanya Charan Padhi, Vill.: Kanchan Bazaar, Kumbhar Sahi, Dhenkanal - 759001, 2) Shri Sunil Kumar Padhi, S/o.: Late Chaitanya Charan Padhi, Both are Vill.: Kanchan Bazaar, Kumbhar Sahi, Dhenkanal - 759001/ Outstanding: ₹11,60,587/- with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Land and Building at Plot No.: 189/1058, Khata No.: 387/233, Mouza: Sanasathiabatla, Kumbhar Sahi, Dhenkanal Sadar, Dist.: Dhenkanal in the name of Mrs. Kamalini Padhi, Bounded by North: Purandhar Sahoo, South: Annapurna Mohapatra, East: Purandhar Sahoo, West: Road	₹25,65,000/- ₹2,56,500/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 540501980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0554057	
10.	<b>MAHANADI VIHAR BRANCH, CUTTACK, Mob.: 7008105322/</b> 1) Mr. Minaketan Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, 2) Mr. Manoj Kumar Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, 3) Mr. Malaya Kumar Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, 4) Manoranjan Behera, C/o.: Late Madhabananda Behera, At: Qtr No.: 7, Labour Colony, Rajabagicha, ₹13,20,428.13 with further interest, cost & Expenses	Land and Residential Building - belonging to Late Madhabananda Behera (Father), Mr. Minaketan Behera (Son), Mr. Manoj Behera (Son), Mr. Malaya Kumar Behera (Son), Mr. Manoranjan Behera (Son) at Plot No.: 1721/2118 & 1721/2441, Khata No.: 657/48, Purigat, At: Qtr No.: R/7, Rajabagicha, Labour Colony, PO.: Telenga Bazar, PS.: Badambadi, Cuttack-753009	₹27,25,000/- ₹2,72,500/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 302211980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0830224	
11.	<b>KUMUNDA BRANCH, Mob.: 8328820334/</b> Borrower: M/s. Sriya Medical Store, Prop.: Prasanta Biswal, S/o.: Lochan Biswal, At: Shop Room No.: 5, Bus Stand, Infront of RI Kurudul Office, Angul-759132 / Guarantors: 1) Lochan Biswal, S/o.: Sadananda Biswal, 2) Ranjan Biswal, S/o.: Sadananda Biswal, Both are At: Sankerjanga, PO.: Golabandha, PS.: Nisha, Dist.: Angul -759143/ Outstanding: ₹10,19,254.60 as on 31.03.2021 with further interest, cost & Expenses	All that piece and parcel of Residential Land at Khata No.: 277/712, Plot No.: 2239/3289, Area: Ac.0.130 dec., Plot No.: 2240/3290, Area: Ac.0.150 dec., & Village/Mouza: Sankerjanga, P.S.: Nisha, Dist: Angul, State: Odisha, PIN-759143, standing in the name of Lochan Biswal & Ranjan Biswal, Plot No.: 2239/3289 is Bounded by North: Babaji Biswal, South: Road, East: own & Purandar Biswal, West: Banambar Biswal, Plot No.: 2240/3290 is Bounded by North: Sadhu Biswal, South: Niz, East: Niz, West: Niz	₹21,00,000/- ₹2,10,000/- ₹10,000/-	Account No.: 193191980050000 IFSC Code: UBIN0819395	
<p><b>Date &amp; Time of Inspection of Properties for intending purchasers: Before 08.03.2022 on any working day during banking hours</b></p> <p><b>DATE &amp; TIME OF E-AUCTION: 10.03.2022 between 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM</b></p> <p><b>Last date &amp; Time of EMD submission: On or before the Commencement of E-Auction</b></p> <p><b>Details of encumbrances if any : NIL</b></p> <p>For registration and login and bidding rules visit <a href="https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/lbapi/index.jsp">https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/lbapi/index.jsp</a>, www.unionbankofindia.co.in. For further detailed any query please contact: Mr. Rishikant Prasad, Mob.: 9769987208</p> <p><b>STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6)/ RULE 9(1) OF STATUTORY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002</b></p> <p>This may also be treated as notice u/r 8(6) / Rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the borrower/s and guarantor/s of the said loan about the holding of E-Auction Sale on the above mentioned date.</p> <p><b>Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 04.02.2022</b> <b>Sd/- Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India</b></p>					



FOCUS CLIMATE CHANGE

# NET ZERO MUST MEAN BUSINESS



With over 70% of all Green House Gas emissions stemming from the energy sector, a rapid transition to renewable energy is the key to decarbonization globally

tions and the shipping fuels used in offshore logistics. These comprehensive decarbonization efforts, together with offsetting less than 10% of residual emissions, will enable us to reach net-zero emissions across our full value chain by 2040.

Nonetheless, government signals are needed to help reinforce credible corporate climate action more broadly. Current national policies leave us on track for 2.7°C of warming by the end of this century. That is unacceptable. Country climate pledges (“nationally determined contributions”) must be strengthened ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh later this year. At a minimum, stronger national commitments would create a positive feedback loop with the private sector by eliminating some of the policy uncertainties.

But governments also can do many other things to bolster corporate climate efforts. A crucial first step is to set higher renewable energy targets and establish more transparent market frameworks to accelerate renewables deployment. Governments can mandate more robust emissions disclosures as well, so that investors can properly assess business climate risks and pursue full value-chain decarbonization. Genuine progress in combating climate change requires genuine transparency.

Moreover, public procurement, which represents 13-20% of global GDP, can be a powerful tool for accelerating emissions reductions. This is especially true in the energy sector. By integrating climate criteria in public tenders, governments can create strong incentives for companies to put themselves on a meaningful decarbonization pathway.

COP26 in Glasgow last year gave us a clear mission: to make net-zero targets fit for purpose. As 2022 gets underway, corporations have a fresh opportunity to establish their climate credibility. That is what the science demands and, ultimately, so does the bottom line.

The author is CEO of Ørsted. Views are personal.  
© PROJECT SYNDICATE, 2022.

The world is awash in net-zero emissions targets. A growing number of countries, regions, cities, and companies have announced that they will adjust their growth strategies to align with the Paris climate agreement’s goal of keeping global temperatures within 1.5° Celsius of pre-industrial levels. By the end of 2021, roughly 90% of global GDP was covered by some type of net-zero pledge, including those made by more than 680 of the world’s largest corporations.

Yet despite this boom in new commitments, real action from businesses is lagging, because we have long lacked a common, science-based understanding of what a corporate net-zero strategy entails. Far too many corporate net-zero pledges fail to account properly for all the relevant greenhouse gases (GHGs). Many also lack a clear mid-century target date, do not encompass their products’ full value chain, and do not reflect the urgency of cutting emissions significantly by 2030.

Worse, many rely far too heavily on offsetting their emissions by purchasing credits generated from carbon-abatement and -removal projects elsewhere.

No wonder UN Secretary-General António Guterres thinks there is “a deficit of credibility and a surplus of confusion over emissions reductions and net-zero targets.” Fortunately, with the recent launch of the Science Based Targets initiative’s (SBTi) Corporate Net-Zero Standard, we now have a framework to show companies how to align their climate plans with the science.

The new standard shows that there are no shortcuts. Credible net-zero targets must include all relevant GHGs and cover a company’s full value chain. They also must aim to cut emissions in half by 2030 in order to reach net zero by 2050 or earlier. Most importantly, a company’s plan must reduce emissions by 90-95% before using offsets to “net” itself the rest of the way to zero.

Closing the corporate credibility gap means moving past the era when many companies could simply counterbalance their emissions with offsets to prolong their ability

to pollute. The private sector now has an opportunity and an obligation to align itself with science. Recognizing this, we at Ørsted piloted a long-term decarbonization plan under the SBTi’s new standard last year and became the world’s first energy company with a validated, science-based net-zero target.

We have already learned valuable lessons from this process, including the need to map the full set of emissions across energy generation and operations, purchased electricity, and the upstream supply chain and downstream use of products sold. Only with proper mapping could we identify and address emissions hotspots across our value chain.

Listening to our strategic suppliers has also proven critical. Now that we know about their own decarbonization pain points, we can work together to alleviate them.

Another important lesson is that companies must develop and draw on the right skills from within their own ranks. Given the wide-ranging impact of the net-zero transition on different business areas, managing it properly requires a diverse range of knowledge and skills. And while we know the direction and destination of our decarbonization trajectory, we have learned to accept that we don’t yet know every step required to complete it. In piloting a de-

carbonization pathway, we have found the SBTi’s guidance and criteria to be crucial.

These lessons may not be applicable to all companies, but the foundation of credible corporate climate action remains largely the same: green energy solutions. With over 70% of all GHG emissions stemming from the energy sector, a rapid transition to renewable energy is the key to decarbonization globally. As major energy consumers, corporations can make a significant contribution by deploying or purchasing green energy, including through renewable-power purchase agreements. They can also take direct action to reduce emissions within all their own operations and across their supply chains.

This is a big opportunity for companies, which is why Ørsted will have completely phased out coal generation by the end of 2023. By continuing to expand our renewable-energy portfolio and reducing our direct carbon emissions, we are on pace to achieve at least a 98% reduction in carbon intensity by 2025 (from 2006 levels), and to reach carbon neutrality in our own energy generation and operations the same year. To address upstream and downstream emissions in our value chain, we will gradually phase out natural-gas sales and cut emissions from the steel in our wind-turbine founda-



Mads Nipper

**THE PRIVATE SECTOR NOW HAS AN OPPORTUNITY AND AN OBLIGATION TO ALIGN ITSELF WITH SCIENCE**



Aakar Patel

**It appears that it is not easy for the Opposition to mobilise people around these two issues of economic failure and mass unemployment**

## Unconcerned Voters

Another budget has come and gone and for a couple of days we have seen and read what people have to say about the economy. Much of this is limited to two things. The first is the government’s taxing and spending and its deficits. And the second on what sops and subsidies have been given. This is of course what the budget is for and it is what is expected. The curious thing is that the economy does not appear to be a relevant subject in India’s political debate. It is not a part of the electoral debate.

We can go a step further and say that a lack of economic performance and inability to deliver growth does not harm the ruling party. This is not a new phenomenon and we can observe that for decades we had low economic growth, what was called the ‘Hindu rate of growth’ under Nehru and Indira Gandhi, of about 3 per cent. Despite this they and their parties remained popular and remained in office.

A related phenomenon is about jobs. India has, according to the government’s own data, the lowest labour participation rate in South Asia and one of the lowest in the world. This refers to those people over 15 who are working or looking for work. In the United States, this rate is 60 per cent, in Thailand around 70 per cent and in China and Vietnam around 75 per cent. In India it is 40 per cent, lower than Pakistan and even Afghanistan. The theory is that people have stopped looking for jobs because they are impossible to find. MNREGA is today 4 times the size it was in 2004 and yet demand for it is unmet because the government has no money.

Though fewer people are in the labour market, the number of the unemployed (those who are looking for work but cannot find it) reached a record of 6 per cent in 2018 according to the government and has not fallen below this rate since.

This problem of jobs has gone along with the softening of the economy. Once again, we only need to see the government’s own data here also. GDP growth began to decline from January 2018 and fell sequentially for 2 years and 3 months before the pandemic. And then the pandemic produced a recession. This year’s high growth rate will only take us back to where we were two years ago.

Taken together, we can see that India’s economy and its capacity to give its people work has been in trouble for a long time. But this is not a part of our political debate and there is no pressure on the ruling party to defend its record on this front. It also appears that it is not easy for the Opposition to mobilise people around these two issues of economic failure and mass unemployment. The mobilisation that has happened on this was spontaneous, such as the Patidar andolan for jobs a few years ago and what is currently happening with Railways recruitment in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The Opposition wants to take the debate away from Hindu-Muslim and such things towards the economy and jobs but is unable to. The question is why. One answer could be, as Ravish Kumar the news anchor has suggested, that the media chooses not to cover these issues. He has said that if the media would focus on jobs for two weeks in a row, the government would give in to the demands of those on the street.

Perhaps this is so. But in today’s era, with social media, one does not require the mainstream media to the extent one did 15 years ago and so it is unlikely that this is being kept suppressed by a lack of attention from the media.

The answer to the question appears to lie in something deeper. It seems that broad issues such as the economy’s health and competent management and the ability of the government to produce an environment where jobs are available are not of particular concern to us as voters. If important, they are less so than other things, like more temples and stopping young women wearing hijab from entering college as we are doing this week in Karnataka, and more statues. When some of us who are directly affected by this economic crisis are mobilised as happened under Hardik Patel in Gujarat or as is happening for the Railway recruitment now, then there is some activity on the ground. But for the most part our popular politics appears to exclude issues that are crucial in many other democracies, especially those of the west. Things that make or break leaders and parties and which are the constant subject of daily debate and concern are not of importance in our India.

We can reflect on what that means about us as voters and us as a nation, and also, if this continues, where we will find ourselves as we enter the Amrit Kaal of our democracy.

The author is Chair of Amnesty International India

### WISDOM CORNER

- “The most important thing is to try and inspire people so that they can be great in whatever they want to do.” — KOBE BRYANT
- “Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow.” — HELEN KELLER
- “Trust in dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.” — KHALIL GIBRAN

### WORDSWORTH

#### Abigail

By 1771, when Tobias Smollett wrote in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* about “An antiquated Abigail, dressed in her lady’s cast clothes”, the term had been around for about a century. It means a lady’s maid. It had been borrowed from a character in a play by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Scornful Lady*, dated 1616. This had been first performed by the Children of the Queen’s Revels, a troupe of child actors, which was a theatrical convention popular at the time. The play was a comedy of fantastic love and high life in London that became a favourite of audiences in following decades, especially after the Restoration in 1660 Samuel Pepys recorded in his *Diary* that he saw it no less than five times between 1660 and 1668. In the play, Abigail was an alternative name of the maidservant, described as “a waiting gentlewoman” whose real name was Younglove. This implies that the word was even then a generic term applied to a maid. The suggestion is that it was a Biblical allusion, to the first book of Samuel, “And when Abigail saw David, she fell at his feet, and said ‘hear the words of thine handmaid.’” On the other hand, Biblical names were common at the time and it may just have been plucked out of the air. The rather rare male equivalent was Andrew. In 1698, Congreve refers in his play *The World to “Abigails and Andrews”, a collective term for servants. This mustn’t be confused with merry-andrew, slang for a clown or a mountebank’s assistant at a fair, which also comes from the male forename, though nobody quite knows why.*

### LOL

#### I thought you were her

A serious drunk walked into a bar and, after staring for some time at the only woman seated at the bar, walked over to her and kissed her. She jumped up and slapped him silly.



He immediately apologized and explained, “I’m sorry. I thought you were my wife. You look exactly like her.” “Why you worthless, insufferable, wretched, no good drunk!” she screamed. “Funny,” he muttered, “you even sound exactly like her.”

### SPECTRUM UNION BUDGET

# Growth Development Dissonance



SN Misra

**IN HER ENTHUSIASM FOR INFRASTRUCTURE BOOST, THE FINANCE MINISTER HAS TURNED A BLIND EYE TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IMPERATIVES**

The Finance Minister while placing the budget last year, on the cusp of acute economic distress, cited Rabindranath Tagore- Faith is the bird which feels the light when the dawn is still dark. When she presented the Economic Survey, a year later, her hopes were realised substantially. GDP growth which had nosedived to 7.7% in 20-21 has increased to around 9.3%.

The FM in the present budget was therefore expected to provide a booster dose to the economic turnaround. She has exceeded that expectation by increasing public capital investment by around 35%. It’s more than double of the capital expenditure of Rs 3.3 lakh in 2019-20. The other thrust area of the FM has been to further digitise India on a massive scale. She is cognizant of the fact that the SMEs provide employment to around 11 crore people, contributing 30% of GDP and 50% of India’s exports. The credit guarantees by the FM in 2020 has benefited around 1.3 crore people engaged in the SME sector. The other big idea which the FM has spawned is boosting the Productive linked incentive scheme in 14 sectors which she hopes will create 60 lakh jobs in the next 5 years.

For the first time the budget has inked a vision map of 25 years to coincide with India’s 100th year of Independence. She plans to conflate three objectives; high growth, inclusive development and fiscal consolidation by bringing down the fiscal deficit. The googly in the budget was 30% capital gain tax on crypto currency which will be issued by the RBI. While the RBI Act has still not been amended to include crypto currency as a legal tender money, this announcement by the FM has given legitimacy to digital transactions of crypto currencies. In fact, the discourse on the budget has been hijacked by the digital assets without assessing the impact and fault lines of this year’s budget.

A close look at the planned capital disbursement would reveal that the major beneficiaries would be roads where it has been doubled to 1.8 lakh crore and railways where there is a whopping increase from Rs30,000 crore in 2021 to 1.36 lakh crore during 2022-23. This is likely to increase the employment potential and the FM hopes that will crowd in private sector investment. Disappointingly, however, the capital investment in social services has been increased

from Rs 10,000 crore last year to Rs 11, 000 crore for 2022-23. Given our poor infrastructure in government schools and dispensaries in both rural and urban India, and complete breakdown of health infrastructure during the pandemic, this lack of allocation priority to health and school infrastructure is disappointing.

India can reap demographic dividend only if its children are provided with balanced nutrition, quality foundational education and assured health care at affordable cost. The ASER brings out how the digital divide between children of the uneducated and the educated has further widened.

Given these distressing signals in the social sector one expected the FM to make adequate allocation to the mega programmes under social sector. But it is distressing to note that the allocation for the Mid-Day-Meal programme has come down from 13,400 crore to 10,233 crore in the year 22-23. Similarly, the allocation for MNREGA has come down from Rs1.1 lakh crore in 2020-21 to Rs73000 crore for 2022-23. 70% of India live in the villages where 75% do not earn minimum wage (SECC Survey 2011) and most of them highly in-

debted as per a NABARD report. In this backdrop it is most distressing to find that the allocation to rural development has been brought down from 1.13 lakh crore to 77,000 crore only.

In India, the top ten percent of Indians hold 58% of total income, while the bottom 50% languish with only 7% of total income. The fruits of high growth of about 7% since 2000 has been largely hijacked by the top ten percent while the middle class and the poor have suffered severely. The WEP strongly recommends a higher tax rate on the super-rich, so that it can be utilised for investment in quality education, health care and infrastructure. Instead of adapting such a sensible approach, the government resorts to humongous borrowing. No wonder Tax/ GDP of India is very poor 13%, as against 30% in most developed countries. In her enthusiasm for infrastructure boost, she has turned a blind eye to human development imperatives, rural India and has given kid glove treatment to the super-rich.

The author is Dean, KIIT School of Management, Bhubaneswar. Views are personal.

### Historic Occasion

Sir, The first ODI of the three-match series against West Indies, starting today at Ahmedabad, is a historic day for Indian cricket as it marks its 1,000th game in 50-overs cricket - the first country to achieve the feat. It is a proud moment for the BCCI, all past and present Indian cricketers and the nation’s die-hard cricket fans. Starting from its first Test in June 1932 against England at Lord’s, the journey of Indian cricket has been staggering indeed. In the last nine decades, Indian cricket has witnessed many incredible and historic wins, with the 1983 World Cup triumph under Kapil Dev being easily the greatest of all, as it has completely changed the face of Indian cricket. Once dismissed by the English cricketers as dull dogs of the game, India has made giant strides, and it is a super power nation of modern day world cricket.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

### Government’s Complacency

Sir, In spite of the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic is still surging through the country, no significant allocation was made towards the health sector in the Union budget 2022-23. Last year the Union Finance Minister had announced a 137 per cent increase in health and well-being expenditure. As per the Revised Estimates, the total health expenditure budget in 2022-23 has increased only 0.23 per cent. According to health experts, the government has devised other plans for the post-pandemic phase. The decrease in allocation for vaccination indicates that the government feels that adequate vaccination has been administered. Experts are of the opinion that allocation towards healthcare this year is insufficient and it cannot help combat the ongoing pandemic. The Union Finance Minister said that since health infrastructure had improved in the last two years, India was in a strong position to face the challenges. Contrary to the expectations, no long-term strategy was seen in the budget to combat the pandemic. Obviously, the government did not want to make any new major announcements related to dealing with the pandemic situation. It only wanted to strengthen and successfully implement some of the initiatives announced recently. However, establishment of integrated public labs and critical care hospital blocks will help defuse the health crisis caused by diseases in the future. In fact, an inadequate budget allocation to the health sector amidst the surging pandemic creates an impression that the government is complacent about the strategies adopted to combat the pandemic.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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



## of the day quote

Many MPs spoke brilliantly and beautifully in Parliament, but some prefer to glorify English speakers by keeping Western views in mind

KIREN RIJU | LAW MINISTER

India will more than double the area that is under exploration and production of oil and gas to 0.5 million square kilometer by 2025 and to 1 million sq km by 2030 with a view to raising domestic output and cut reliance on imported fuel

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | PETROLEUM MINISTER

Excellent news! India having the largest network of Ramsar Sites in South Asia manifests the commitment of our citizens to protect flora and fauna and live in harmony with nature

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Teacher held

**New Delhi:** A 26-year-old teacher of paramedics was arrested for allegedly stealing the women's bags from the X-ray machines at Delhi Metro stations, police said Saturday. A resident of Uttam Nagar, the accused, Garima Pandey, is a post-graduate in Microbiology and has recently joined a private institute for paramedics as a teacher, they said.

### Contraband seized

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir police said on Saturday that it has busted a Narco-Militancy module by arresting two people along with contraband worth ₹18 crore in Baramulla district. In a statement the police said, "Today police party of Police Station Uri and Police Post Kamalkote headed by SHO Police station Uri were patrolling the area from Dachi towards Basgran."

### Six convicted

**New Delhi:** A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court has convicted six Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA) terrorists in the Puducherry Pipe Bomb case, officials said Saturday. Thiruselvam alias Murasu, 44, Thangaraj alias Tamilarasan, 45, Kaviyarasan alias Raja, 34, Kalailingam, 44, Karthik, 32 and John Martin, 30, all residents of Tamil Nadu were convicted. The Court sentenced Thiruselvam, Kaviyarasan, Kalailingam, Karthik and John Martin to 7 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹3,500 each and convicted Thangaraj to 5 years of rigorous imprisonment and ₹3,000 fine under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activity (Prevention) Act, 1967 and Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

### Two workers die

**Ankleshwar:** Two workers died and three were injured in a blast at a reactor of a pharma company in Ankleshwar town of Gujarat's Bharuch district, police said Saturday. The blast occurred in a chemical reactor at Abhilasha Pharma in Ankleshwar industrial area late on Friday evening, an official from Ankleshwar GIDC police said.

### Three arrested

**Thane:** Police have arrested three persons for allegedly stealing ₹50,000 cash from a temple at Bhayandar in Thane district of Maharashtra, an official said Saturday. The trio, identified as Shamsuda Qureshi (30), Sayeed Khan (42) and Imran Shaikh (22), was arrested by the Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar police for the offence that took place during the intervening night of January 30 and 31, he said.

# Statue of Equality unveiled in Hyd

AGENCIES

**Hyderabad, Feb 5:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday unveiled a 216-feet tall Statue of Equality commemorating the 11th-century Saint Ramanujacharya.

At an elaborate ceremony held at Tridandi Chinna Jeer Swamy's ashram at Muchintal on the outskirts of Hyderabad, he dedicated to the world the giant statue which commemorates Ramanujacharya's teachings promoting equality in all aspects of living including faith, caste and creed.

Modi visited the 45-acre temple complex housing the statue and the identical recreations of 108 Divya Desams or ornately carved temples. Earlier, he also participated in puja and other rituals as part of the ongoing 12-day Sri Ramanuja Sahasrabdi 'Samaroham', the 1000th birth anniversary celebrations of Ramanujacharya.

The statue is made of 'panchaloha', a combination of five metals: gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc and is among one of the tallest metallic statues in sitting position, in the world. The statue is mounted on a 54-feet high base building, named 'Bhadra Vedi', has floors devoted for a Vedic digital library and research centre, ancient Indian texts, a theatre, an educational gallery detailing many works of Ramanujacharya.

In the presence of Chinna Jeevar Swami who presided over the event, the Prime Minister watched a 3D presentation on the life journey and teaching of Ramanujacharya.

The Prime Minister, in his speech, underlined the importance of the teachings of

## WAR OF WORDS

**Hyderabad:** A war of words broke out between the BJP and the ruling TRS after Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao did not receive Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Hyderabad Saturday. Rao also skipped both the programmes attended by the Prime Minister. The Chief Minister was reportedly down with mild fever. However, BJP leaders have slammed the Chief Minister for staying away, alleging that he has insulted the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the ruling TRS hit back at the BJP and asked the saffron party to stop 'these cheap and misleading tactics'. TRS argued that there is no necessity for the Chief Minister to receive the Prime Minister on a private visit.

Ramanujacharya. He emphasised that development and social justice should reach all sections of society without any differences and those who were victimised for generations should be made partners in development. He said the transforming India was making all out efforts in this direction.

Modi said the Statue of Equality will inspire the future generations and strengthen Indian philosophy. He said the freedom struggle is not only a fight for demonstration of strength but also an expression of live and let live, an ancient Indian philosophy.

Recalling that Dr BR Ambedkar also supported the views of Ramanujacharya on equality, Modi said his government's vision is for Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikas, Sab Ka Viswas and Sab Ka Prayas.



# 3% divorces in Mumbai due to traffic: Fadnavis's wife

*The remark drew ridicule from the Shiv Sena, which controls the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation. Amruta Fadnavis made the comment after attending a function organised by a local BJP unit Friday. She was asked by reporters about the condition of roads in the city*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 5:** Traffic jams deny 'family time' to people and

cause three per cent of divorces in Mumbai, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's wife Amruta Fadnavis has claimed.

The remark drew ridicule from the Shiv Sena, which controls the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Amruta Fadnavis made the comment after attending a function organised by a local BJP unit Friday.

She was asked by reporters about the condition of roads in the city.

"...I am saying this as a common citizen because I see potholes and traffic jams daily. Do you know how many divorces are taking place because of it in Mumbai? Three per cent," she said.

# Battleground U'khand: BJP banking on 'Brand Modi'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Dehradun, Feb 5:** In the run-up to the Assembly elections in Uttarakhand scheduled on February 14, the BJP is banking heavily on 'Brand Modi'.

The saffron party is prominently using Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image in several publicity videos, theme song and hoardings across the state, projecting him and his government's achievements.

Modi and the images of his visit to Uttarakhand are prominently displayed in all the campaign videos, including the theme song for the Assembly polls.

The party is highlighting the Central government's development



and welfare initiatives taken under the leadership of Modi, such as 'Kisan Samman Nidhi' and several other schemes.

**The BJP is determined to continue its protest against the new excise policy till it's withdrawn by the Kejriwal government**

SMRITI IRANI | UNION WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

## CJI URGED TO RESUME PHYSICAL HEARING

The Supreme Court Bar Association Saturday requested Chief Justice of India N V Ramana that physical hearings in the apex court be reassumed to the pre-pandemic level as the Covid situation is in control



## COVID IMPACT



Shikaras stand parked at Dal Lake during the weekend lockdown imposed by the authorities in wake of surge in COVID-19 cases in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

# Farooq slams Delimitation Commission report

*In its report, the Delimitation Commission has proposed an overhaul of assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies which includes redrawing of the Anantnag Parliamentary seat by adding Rajouri and Poonch from the Jammu region, besides carrying out massive changes in the Kashmir division*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

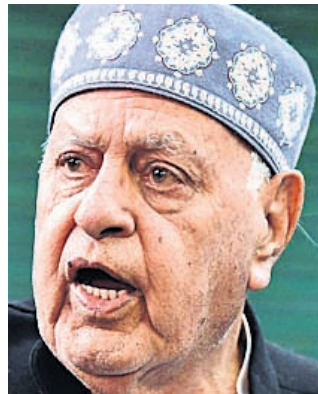
**New Delhi, Feb 5:** Former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, who heads the National Conference, on Saturday slammed the draft report of the Delimitation Commission on Jammu and Kashmir, saying it "defies any and all logic" and no political, social and administrative reason can justify the recommendations.

Abdullah, who is Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar parliamentary seat, also made it clear that the party is now engaged in formulating a detailed response to this report and also exploring other options to challenge the entire process.

One of the five Associate members of the Commission, the NC leader said the report was received on Friday night and "I am in the process of reading it in detail. But from whatever I have seen, we at the National Conference completely reject this report."

Abdullah, who has been the chief minister of the state thrice besides being a union minister, said, "There is no political, administrative and social logic that justifies these recommendations".

He said that they were earlier told that the delimitation exercise was being undertaken to make assembly seats contiguous with the district. "But the draft report is showing a different picture altogether. 'Like Anantnag Lok Sabha seat in South Kashmir will have six assembly seats from Rajouri and Poonch, which are part of Jammu



division and located across Peerpanjal range," Abdullah said and asked, "How is this inclined for providing better administration?"

Similarly, the way assembly constituencies have been carved out in which some have "completely disappeared defies any and all logic".

In its report, the Delimitation Commission has proposed an overhaul of assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies which includes redrawing of the Anantnag Parliamentary seat by adding Rajouri and Poonch from the

Jammu region, besides carrying out massive changes in the Kashmir division.

Many of the assembly seats in erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state have vanished that include Habba Kadal, a seat that was seen as a traditional bastion of migrant Kashmiri pandits.

Similarly Budgam district, which had five assembly seats, was redrawn and merged with Baramulla Parliamentary constituency besides splitting of some of the areas and carving out new assembly seats like Kunzer in North Kashmir. Pulwama, Tral and some areas of Shopian, which formed part of the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat, will now be part of the Srinagar Parliamentary seat.

The report was sent to the five associate members including Abdullah, Hasnain Masoodi and Akbar Lone (Lok Sabha MPs from the National Conference) and Jitendra Singh and Jugal Kishore (BJP MPs) on Friday.

They have been asked to submit their views by February 14 after which the report would be put in the public domain, officials said.

## NMC issues new guidelines

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** The National Medical Commission (NMC) Saturday issued guidelines that the fees of 50 per cent seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities should be at par with the fees in government medical colleges of that particular state or UT.

"The benefit of this fee structure would be first available to those candidates who have availed government quota seats, but it will be limited to the extent of 50 per cent of the total sanctioned strength of the respective medical colleges and deemed universities," read the guidelines issued by NMC.

The fees in the private medical colleges presently are fixed by the state regulatory authority for the merit seats.

However, after the implementation of the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, the NMC has mandated framing guidelines for

determination of fees and other charges in respect of 50 per cent seats in private medical institutions as well as deemed universities.

If the government quota seats are less than 50 per cent of total sanctioned seats, the remaining candidates would avail benefits of fee equivalent to the government medical college fees, based purely on merit, the guidelines read.

The NMC said the decision was taken after extensive consultation. Earlier, an expert committee constituted by the NMC recommended a total of 26 broad guidelines for fixing fees at private medical colleges and deemed-to-be universities.

"A reconstituted expert committee examined 1,800 responses and submitted the revised draft guidelines. The recommendations of this expert committee have been accepted by the NMC at its meeting on December 29, 2021," the guidelines read.

## BSP fields Khwaja against Yogi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Feb 5:** The BSP Saturday released a list of 54 candidates for the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, fielding Khwaja Samsuddin against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from Gorakhpur Urban constituency.

In its latest list, the Mayawati-led party has given tickets to seven Muslim candidates. The Bahujan Samaj Party has fielded Santosh Tiwari from Fazilnagar assembly constituency in Kushinagar district. Tiwari will take on Samajwadi Party (SP) candidate and former BSP leader Swami Prasad Maurya.

The BSP has given tickets to Prateek Pandey from Katheri and to Chandra Prakash Verma from Akbarpur. Both constituencies fall under Ambedkarnagar district. In the 2017 state assembly elections, BSP's Lalji Verma and Ram Achal Rajbhar had won from Katheri and Akbarpur respectively.

In November last year, Verma and Rajbhar joined the SP at a 'Janadesh Maharally' in Ambedkarnagar. The BSP has fielded its sitting MLA Uma Shankar Singh from Rasra in Ballia.

The party has named Rajendra Singh as its candidate from Chillupar in Gorakhpur. The seat was earlier held by Vinay Shankar Tiwari, who quit the party and joined the SP.

The 54 assembly constituencies for which the BSP announced its candidates cover Ambedkar nagar, Balrampur, Siddharthanagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria and Ballia districts. These districts will go to polls in the sixth phase of the state assembly elections March 3.



## KERALA GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

## CM's secy knew all, says main accused

SWAPNA SURESH SAYS SHE WOULD NOT HAVE TURNED, HAD SIVASANKAR NOT MENTIONED BASELESS THINGS ABOUT HER IN HIS BOOK

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 5:** The gold smuggling case, which was the main plank of the Congress-led opposition in the 2020 local body polls and the 2021 April 6 Assembly elections though failed as the LDF led by Pinarayi Vijayan returned to power with a huge mandate, is back to haunt the ruling Left with prime accused in the case Swapna Suresh claiming that the then Principal Secretary to Vijayan M Sivasankar was aware of all the developments.

The 2020 local body polls and the 2021 April 6 Assembly polls, the single biggest campaign point of the Congress-led Opposition was Kerala gold smuggling case, thanks to Covid also, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan came out clean by winning both the polls and until Friday, the ruling Left often used to ask, what happened to the allegations levelled against him, the people have dumped everything and gave him the thumbs up. Now it remains to be seen after the explosive revelations of prime accused in the case Swapna Suresh,

where she says, the then principal secretary to Vijayan- M Sivasankar knew everything.

She broke her silence after an autobiography of Sivasankar, written in Malayalam, said he was cheated by Swapna by gifting him an iPhone that was purchased using bribe money. He also said that he had no role in getting her a five figure monthly salary in the IT department of the Kerala government.

After remaining away from the media glare following her release from jail on bail, Swapna hit back at the once blue eyed boy of Vijayan-Sivasankar, revealing he was behind everything which includes her escape from Kerala by road to Bangalore, when the entire state was under heavy lockdown in July 2020 on account of Covid restrictions where inter district travel was banned.

In her interview to a TV channel, Friday night, she made no bones about her closeness with Sivasankar and said that it was with his help that she, along with her husband and children and their friend Sandip Nair, managed to sneak out of Kerala.

On the two audio clips of hers,



one which came out on the day she and her family was on the run to Bangalore and another while in custody, she said, it was all stage managed and directed by him and others. In both these clips, she was speaking in a manner giving a clean chit to Vijayan.

"I was made to say that," said Swapna and added that only master brains can work like this.

Incidentally, the Congress led Opposition and the BJP all throughout the media trial then, had alleged that Vijayan cannot wash his hands, even as Sivasankar was first suspended and later arrested and jailed from October 29, 2020 till February 1, 2021, when he got bail.

The CPI-M and the entire Left rank and file had vehemently attacked the detractors of Vijayan stating that if Sivasankar has done a wrong then he is only responsible

and Vijayan cannot be answerable.

The smuggling case came to light July 5, 2020, when the Customs arrested Sarith, a former employee of the UAE Consulate here, for allegedly smuggling gold in a diplomatic baggage destined for the Consulate. Swapna and her associate Sandip Nair were arrested in the case by the NIA from Bangalore a few days later.

Swapna crisply said all what she knew was known to Sivasankar also and he should not have stooped so low to accuse her.

One major revelation made by her was the arrival of the NIA in the case was done by none other than Sivasankar and was meant that Swapna Suresh should not open her mouth for six months and keep her behind bars.

"Had I mentioned the name of Sivasankar when I was arrested, he would have been arrested then it-

## RECAP

The smuggling case came to light July 5, 2020, when the Customs arrested Sarith, a former employee of the UAE Consulate here, for allegedly smuggling gold in a diplomatic baggage destined for the Consulate

Incidentally, the Congress led Opposition and the BJP all throughout the media trial then, had alleged that Vijayan cannot wash his hands, even as Sivasankar was first suspended and later arrested and jailed from October 29, 2020 till February 1, 2021, when he got bail

The CPI-M and the entire Left rank and file had vehemently attacked the detractors of Vijayan stating that if Sivasankar has done a wrong then he is only responsible and Vijayan cannot be answerable

self. Initially I did not say, but later when the probe agencies found out from his WhatsApp chat the discussions that we had, then I had to say," said Swapna. She also said that now the things are all before the court and very soon everything will come out.

Now all eyes are on the budget session in the Assembly which will be convened later this month. She concluded by saying that she would not have said all these if Sivasankar had not mentioned baseless things about her in the book.

## Swapna's disclosures give Cong, BJP ammo to corner CM Vijayan



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 5:** Even as top Congress leaders Saturday demanded a re-investigation into the gold smuggling case in the light of the fresh disclosures made by prime accused Swapna Suresh, BJP said it stands vindicated.

On Friday, Swapna said M Sivasankar, the then principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan who spent 98 days in jail in the case and now out on bail, knew everything what happened in the gold smuggling case and also said she was made to speak twice, once while she was on the run from here after the first arrest in the case was made and later while she was in the custody of Customs, to give a clean chit to the Vijayan government, and it was stage-managed by Sivasankar.

Then Leader of Opposition and Congress veteran Ramesh Chennithala said he is now a relieved person as each and every thing he said then when the case first surfaced in 2020 has turned true.

None would forget how contemptuously were my repeated statements in this case was dismissed by Vijayan and an array of Left leaders then. Following the disclosures, the stage is now set for a re-investigation into the case as Swapna herself has admitted everything was done at the behest of Sivasankar and who does not know that the office of Vijayan was closely involved in all this. Sivasankar who was recently reinstated should be suspended with immediate effect, said Chennithala.

The present Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan said the office of Vijayan is hub of all sorts of activities including corruption.

To give Vijayan a clean chit, a conspiracy was hatched and with the disclosures it has now become crystal clear, the audio clips that came out then was done to give a clean chit to Vijayan. A probe should be ordered to find out this as the Police

also played a role in it. The disclosures also reveal that commission was received in his pet project - Life Mission and none will now believe that Vijayan never knew anything, said Satheesan.

Both the Congress leaders pointed out that when the probe in this case went forward well, a lot of sudden things came to a grinding halt and it happened because of a secret understanding between the CPI-M and the BJP and this was reflected in the April 2021 assembly polls.

In 60 constituencies these two parties were hand in glove, said Chennithala.

State BJP president K Surendran Saturday told the media that it was he who had then revealed that a call had gone from the office of Vijayan to the Customs to release the diplomatic baggage and each and everything that he had then said including the safe passage of Swapna from here to Bangalore has now come true. The revelations of Swapna are very serious and Vijayan and the CPI-M should now speak up on all these, said Surendran.

It was Friday night that Swapna spilled the beans and it came after an autobiography in Malayalam of Sivasankar. She was really angry of his statements about her in the book, where he was trying to wash his hands off and said he did nothing for her.

Meanwhile, various central agencies -- NIA, Customs and the Enforcement Directorate also has been caught napping in the light of her disclosures as for several months the probes have lost its initial steam and sources in the know of things revealed that these agencies are now closely studying her fresh revelations.

With Vijayan reaching here only Monday after his medical treatment in the US and presently visiting various Emirates in the UAE, even his top party leaders continue to remain silent and Saturday, Sivasankar said he does not wish to react to the statements of Swapna.

## Arunachal to earn carbon credits from micro, mini, small hydropower projects



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi/Itanagar, Feb 5:** Arunachal Pradesh is banking on its micro, mini, and small hydropower projects to earn carbon credits, a step the state government believes will add to the efforts for India to achieve net zero emissions by 2070.

Out of the total hydropower plants in the state, 98 micro, mini and small hydropower plants with combined installed capacity of 50,295 MW have been considered for carbon credits registration and assets management for the year 2014-2020, said a top government official.

These hydropower plants are run-of-river plants, and eligible for carbon credit. Micro-hydro projects are those up to 200 KW capacity, mini up to 2 MW and small up to 25 MW.

The state Hydro Power Development Department is the renewable energy-producing entity that will claim Carbon Credits, which are issued by the Universal Carbon Registry.

Deputy Chief Minister, Chowna Mein, who is also in-charge of the Department, was instrumental in getting the Carbon Assets Management (Carbon Credits Trading) for hydropower plants.

With state-owned 135 plants, the Department has power worth 74.88 million units, which is equivalent

to 54,410 Carbon Credits annually and can earn approximately Rs 1.15 crore at present rate. Of the three-stage process of registration, credit realisation and trading, the state is through with the first one.

We expect to get credits somewhere in 3-4 months or at max, six months. Once that is done, trading can be done any time, state's Commissioner, Hydropower and Planning, Prashant Lokhande told IANS.

Once anointed as the powerhouse of the nation for its vast potential of 50,000 MW plus hydropower, Arunachal Pradesh has been catering to its villages spread over mighty Himalayas with such small, micro, and mini hydro power projects on smaller springs, rivers even as it aims at selling power from mega hydropower projects on bigger rivers.

Recently, Arunachal Pradesh has announced 50 micro and mini hydropower projects under the Golden Jubilee Border Village Illumination programme in phased manner. In the first phase, 17 micro and mini hydropower projects with installed capacity of 1,255 KW are planned.

"Our small hydro installation is 80MW out of which 50 MW is eligible as they are commissioned after 2002. However, we will also ask NEPCO to go for the same for 600 MW Kameng and 110 MW Pare hydropower projects," Lokhande added.

## Manipur CM files nomination; seeks re-election for 5th time

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Imphal, Feb 5:** Manipur Chief Minister and BJP candidate Nongthombam Biren Singh Saturday filed his nomination papers seeking re-election for the fifth consecutive term from the Heingang Assembly Constituency in Imphal East district.

The 61-year-old Congress turned BJP leader, who was elected to the state Assembly for the fourth consecutive term earlier in between 2002 and 2017, submitted his candidature to the Returning officer Elangbam Amuthoi Khanganba accompanied by Manipur state BJP President Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi.

Singh, who served the Border Security Force (BSF) as he was recruited in the para-military force for his excellent performance as a footballer, tweeted, "It gives me immense pleasure to file the nomination as the BJP candidate from Heingang AC at the Office of



Returning Officer today. I was joined by Smt A Sharda Devi Ji, President BJP Manipur. Best wishes to all BJP candidates filing nominations for the upcoming election.

Singh, who earlier told IANS that he is strongly confident of BJP retaining power by securing at least 40 seats (in the 60-member Assembly), first elected to the Manipur Assembly in 2002 as a Democratic Revolutionary People's Party candidate from the Heingang Assembly Constituency and in the

next year he joined the Congress and again retained seat in 2007 as a Congress nominee. In 2012, he retained the Assembly seat for the third consecutive term and resigned from the state Assembly and the Congress party in October 2016 and joined the BJP. Biren Singh was re-elected to the state Assembly in 2017 from the same Heingang Assembly Constituency for the 4th term and sworn in as Chief Minister of Manipur March 15, 2017.

## Drones to lift Lakadong turmeric in Meghalaya

Lakadong turmeric has been identified under the One District, One Product (ODOP) initiative as a product with huge potential for growth and export from West Jaintia Hills district

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** The commerce and industry ministry Saturday said it is promoting use of drones for transportation of famous Lakadong turmeric from Meghalaya to other parts of the country with an aim to resolve

first mile connectivity issues of farmers from the hinterland.

Lakadong turmeric has been identified under the One District, One Product (ODOP) Initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) as a product with huge potential for growth and export from West Jaintia Hills, a district of Meghalaya.

"West Jaintia Hills today witnessed the first-of-its-kind Fly-Off Event to demonstrate the use of novel and innovative drone/UAV technology for payload delivery, that could serve as a model of solving the first mile connectivity issues for Lakadong Turmeric farmers from the hinterland," the ministry said in a statement.

Sumita Dawra, Additional



Secretary, DPIIT said that this event was a first step towards showcasing the innovative solutions that can propel first mile connectivity.

The flyoff event would not only give a fillip to the ODOP initiative but also leverage modern technology as a fundamental solution to overcome the bottleneck of trans-

portation that acts as a barrier in realising the optimal potential of this spice from Meghalaya, she said.

Despite India being the world's largest turmeric producer and exporter, turmeric imports had also been increasing. It said that in spite of the highest curcumin content and excel-

lent potential for domestic sales and export, Lakadong turmeric faces severe market access issues due to the remoteness of the location, topography and terrain.

"Thus, buyers have to incur additional costs to transport the goods from the villages via local pick-up trucks till the major transporters' loading point. Additional costs of transportation and delays in the same act as barriers / disincentives for the buyer in the process of procurement," it added.

This turmeric has the highest curcumin content of 7-9 per cent (in comparison to 3 per cent or less in other varieties). Meghalaya has also applied for a Geographical Indication tag for Lakadong turmeric.

## Assam tea seller clears NEET in first attempt

POVERTY FORCED DAS TO QUIT HIS STUDIES AFTER CLASS 12, BUT HE DID NOT GIVE UP ON THE DREAM TO BECOME A DOCTOR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Barpeta (Assam), Feb 5:** It was no mean task juggling studies and serving tea to customers at the shop run by his mother. Rahul Das (24), however, took the challenges in his stride and managed to do both. His hard work has finally paid off as the tea seller from Assam's Bajali district secured a seat at AIIMS-Delhi, having cleared NEET exam in the first attempt.

The journey wasn't an easy one. Das and his brother were raised by their mother, who was left alone to fend for herself and two sons by her

husband some 11 years ago. Poverty forced Das to quit his studies after Class 12, but he did not give up on the dream to become a doctor.

Das said he would find time to study in between serving customers at his mother's shop in Patacharkuchi Chowk area of the district.

"I have seen my mother toil hard for us. We couldn't afford a helper at the shop. Since school, I made it a point to help her in some way or the other... I made tea and sold it, too. And as and when it was possible, I would sit down to study at the shop," he explained.



In 2015, he had cleared the higher secondary examination, and left studies for want of money.

However, his zeal for higher education prompted Das to join the Central Institute of Petrochemicals

Engineering & Technology (CIPET), two years later, to pursue a diploma in plastic engineering.

Das passed with a distinction (85 per cent marks) after three years, and started work at a multinational company in Guwahati as a 'quality engineer' in October 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There was no job satisfaction at all... I always wanted to be a doctor. One of my cousins is a dental surgeon and he happened to be my inspiration. I decided to leave my job and begin preparations for NEET with whatever resources

were available online as I had no money to buy books," he told PTI as customers lined up outside his shop to have a cup of piping hot tea.

Das, who has a burn injury on one of his hands, candidly said that he bagged the 12,068th position in NEET, but his Scheduled Caste (SC) and Person with Disabilities (PWD) certificates helped him get through AIIMS.

Summing up the conversation with PTI, the 24-year-old expressed gratitude to all those who have helped them financially or by other means during the family's hour of need.

## 'Tripura to soon have national law university'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Agartala, Feb 5:** Tripura is set to have a national law university soon, as a bill seeking its creation will be tabled in the next session of assembly, a top official of the state's education department said Saturday.

Academic activities of the varsity is expected to be held from the Tripura Judicial Academy building for the next academic session. It will be later shifted to a new building, he said.

Tripura Law Minister Minister Ratan Lal Nath has met with the officials concerned to push the plan for setting up a full-fledged law university, the official said.



## of the day quote

I have taken serious note of certain comments made inside and outside the House. It would be appropriate for any member not to comment on the Chair inside or outside the House or on social media



OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

While the government has decided to celebrate dates associated with religious icons and personalities, it would be better to imbibe their teachings



ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY | CONGRESS LEADER

Congress will emerge as the single largest party in Goa after the February 14 assembly elections



SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

## SHORT TAKES

### 2 militants killed

**Srinagar:** Two LeT terrorists were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Srinagar's Zakura area, officials said Saturday. "Two terrorists of terror outfit LeT/TRF neutralised by Srinagar Police. One of the killed terrorists Ikhtaq Hajam was involved in recent killing of HC Ali Mohd at Hassanpora, Anantnag. Incriminating materials including two pistols recovered," J&K Police said in a tweet citing Inspector General Police Kashmir zone Vijay Kumar. A joint team of the police and the security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about presence of terrorists.

### Six injured

**Patna:** One person died and six others were injured as three vehicles, including two trucks, collided on Patna-Arrah NH 30, police said Saturday. According to the police, the accident took place on Friday, when a truck collided head-on with another in attempt to save an SUV which was trying to overtake it. The SUV too overturned after hitting the rear of one of the two trucks. The truck was coming from the opposite direction and Bolero was heading towards Arrah. The accident took place at Kalighat near Sikandarpur village around 11.45 pm on Friday.

### Soldier killed

**Srinagar:** A soldier was killed and another was injured on Saturday by a speeding truck in Srinagar, police sources said. The accident took place near the fruit mandi in Parimpora area on the outskirts of the city. The soldiers were part of a road opening party (RoP) deployed to secure security force convoys and VIP movement on the highway. "After hitting the soldiers, the truck driver did not stop, and fled away from the spot. Trooper Sanjay Kumar died on the spot while another soldier, Rafiq Ahmed has been shifted to hospital for treatment," the sources said.

### Two arrested

**Gurugram:** A team of Gurugram Police crime branch has arrested a woman and her friend for allegedly killing a man, the police said Friday. The arrested individuals have been identified as Gulsan (35) and Naeem Alvi alias Musharraf (22) -- residents of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. The deceased has been identified as Ikrar. The deceased's tiffin box, mobile phone, a motorcycle used in the crime and the culprit's mobile phones have been recovered by the investigation team. The woman disclosed before the police that her husband Ibrahim and the victim Ikrar used to drink together which she dislikes.

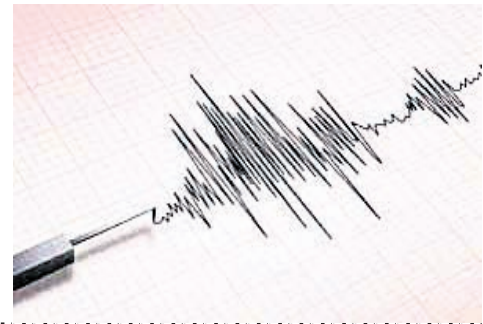


Testing of samples of the proposed e-passports is underway to ensure that they are secure

S JAISHANKAR | UNION MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

## QUAKE HITS J&K

A 5.7 magnitude earthquake hit Jammu and Kashmir Saturday, but there were no reports of any loss of life or damage to property, officials said



# India now has a king not PM: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kichcha (Uttarakhand), Feb 5:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of leaving protesting farmers on roads for a year amid the pandemic and alleged India now has a king who believes people should keep quiet when he makes a decision.

Addressing farmers at a rally here, Rahul Gandhi said the Congress intends to provide a government that works in partnership with farmers, the youths and the poor. "If a prime minister does not work for all he cannot be a prime minister. By that measure, Narendra Modi is not a prime minister," he told the Uttarakhandi Kisan Swabhiman Samvad rally here.

Citing the example of the UPA government led by Manmohan Singh, he said farmers approached it for loan waivers and that was done within 10 days. A loan waiver worth ₹70,000 crore was given to them.

"It was not a dole or a free gift. We did it because you work 24 hours for the country," Rahul



Gandhi said. "The Congress never shut its doors on farmers... We want to work in partnership with farmers, the poor, labourers so that every section feels it is their government," the former Congress chief said.

Rahul accused Modi of leaving the farmers on the road amid Covid and cold for a year and not inviting them to listen to their grievances. "India does not have a prime minister today. It has a king who believes that when the king takes a decision everyone else should keep

quiet," Rahul alleged. Referring to the wealth gap in the society, the Congress leader spoke about "two Indias" with such income disparity which is "not seen anywhere else".

"We have one India of rich industrialists, five-star hotels and Mercedes cars and another India of the poor and the unemployed where inflation is rising. A select group of around 100 people have as much wealth as 40 per cent of India's population. Such income disparity is not seen anywhere

Rahul accused Modi of leaving the farmers on the road amid Covid and cold for a year and not inviting them to listen to their grievances

Rahul Gandhi congratulated farmers for their resistance to the three farm laws, which were ultimately rescinded by the BJP-led Union government

else," he said.

"We don't want two Indias but one India. We want the injustice to an end."

Rahul Gandhi congratulated farmers for their resistance to the three farm laws, which were ultimately rescinded by the BJP-led Union government. He said the Congress stood with them in their struggle because they were being subjected to injustice.

Congress campaign head for Uttarakhand Harish Rawat and the party's state unit chief Ganesh Godiyal shared the dais with Rahul Gandhi at the rally which was his first in the state after the announcement of poll dates. Uttarakhand goes to polls February 14.

# RAJNATH TAKES A SWIPE AT RAHUL

"Rahul Gandhi claims three-four Chinese soldiers were killed in Galwan. He trusts the Chinese media.

According to the Australian media, 38 to 50 Chinese soldiers were killed. But the Congress leader has no trust in the valour of our army jawans," Rajnath said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mathura, Feb 5:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Saturday hit out at the Samajwadi Party for its "appeasement politics" and also launched a scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi for his comment on the Galwan clashes, saying the Congress leader only "trusts" the Chinese media.

Speaking in Farah town of Baldeo assembly constituency, while campaigning for BJP candidate and sitting MLA Puran Prakash, the union minister said politics should be above religion.

Targeting the SP, he said, "The basic purpose of politics is not just running a government but working for the welfare of the society and the country," he said, adding the BJP will never accept politics based on division.

Singh also accused Rahul Gandhi of trusting the Chinese media and not the valour of Indian soldiers.

"Rahul Gandhi claims three-four Chinese soldiers were killed in Galwan. He trusts the Chinese media. According to the Australian media, 38 to 50 Chinese soldiers were killed. But the Congress leader has no trust in the valour of our army jawans," he said. Singh also made a reference of

how Jan Sangh founder Shyama Prasad Mookerji had mentioned in the 1951 election manifesto about eliminating Article 370 from Jammu & Kashmir. "Now the dream of Mookerji has been made a reality by Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Singh said.

He also invoked Rajiv Gandhi's remark that only 15 per cent of a rupee sent from Delhi reached the village to say that now hundred per cent is utilised owing to the administrative capability of Modi.

Farmers under Kisan Samman Nidhi now get hundred per cent, while labourers and poor who lost their jobs during Covid are being provided free ration twice a month, he said.

Singh asserted that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement that the government will pay ₹2.37 lakh crore towards procurement of wheat and paddy under MSP operations is a proof of the Centre's concern for farmers.

He hailed Modi's leadership in strengthening India's position in the global arena.

He also lauded the Indian army for destroying terrorists' camps in Pakistan after the Pulwama incident, saying it demonstrates that India cannot be taken lightly.

## Law graduate held for duping over 200 people

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested a man, a law graduate, for duping over 200 people on the pretext of investing in different schemes to earn high profit.

The accused identified as Himanshu Singh, alias Rishu, was running the racket along with three others - Praveen Kumar Singh, Venu Singh and Deepak Kumar Singh. The three had already been arrested by the police and charge sheeted in the case.

Furnishing details, DCP (EOW) Mohd Ali said it was alleged that Praveen, Venu, Deepak and Himanshu were operating a society in the name of Jai Maa Laxmi Co-Operative Thrift & Credit Society Ltd. and running a shop in the name of Arpit Cloth Store at Mandawali, Fajalpur, Delhi.

"They had induced and cheated approximately 200 innocent people in the area of Mandawali, Delhi on the pretext of investing in different schemes to earn high profit," the DCP said.

During the course of investigation, it came to the notice that said society was not registered with RBI and hence, they were not authorised to collect the money from the public directly in any scheme.

As the accused Praveen and Venu were absconding since the registration of the case, they were declared Proclaimed Persons (absconders) in February, 2020 and accused Himanshu was declared absconder in September, 2021 by a Delhi Court.

"Three accused persons were already arrested and charge sheeted. The accused Himanshu was deliberately evading his arrest and has kept on hiding himself and finally he was arrested by EOW," the official informed.

## FESTIVE FERVOUR



Devotees participate in the Rath Yatra of Lord Raghunath on the occasion of Basant Panchami in Kullu

# 'CM face should be capable to win 60 seats'

"This election is for the betterment of Punjab, this election is for the future of Punjab. Shri Rahul Gandhi ji will announce the next CM face of Punjab via a virtual rally from Ludhiana on February 6, 2022," the Punjab Youth Congress said in a tweet

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, Feb 5:** Ahead of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to announce the chief minister's face in his virtual address from Ludhiana city in Punjab on Sunday, state president Navjot Sidhu on Saturday said the chief minister face should be the one



who can win 60 seats in the 117-member Assembly. This will be Gandhi's second visit to the state in a week.

In his previous visit, Rahul Gandhi had assured workers that the party will decide CM candidate well ahead of the February 20 polling.

"This election is for the betterment of Punjab, this election is for the fu-

ture of Punjab. Shri Rahul Gandhi ji will announce the next CM face of Punjab via a virtual rally from Ludhiana on Feb 6, 2022," the Punjab Youth Congress said in a tweet.

A day ahead of the announcement, party state President Navjot Sidhu said the CM's face will decide whether 60 contestants of the party become MLAs or not.

# Heavy snowfall thaws frozen memories of Simla

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, Feb 5:** Heavy snowfall thawed the frozen memories of Simla - the erstwhile capital of British India, as a thick quilt, and not blanket, of white covered the Queen of Hills, now called Shimla, in the past two days - the highest spell in one and a half decades.

Old-timers recalled on Saturday that for almost two decades Shimla, which was planned for a maximum population of 16,000 and now supports over 2.50 lakh, has not recorded this kind of heavy snowfall.

Jiya Lal Panta, a retired government employee settled in the city since 1960, said till the 1980s, heavy snow was a normal feature of the town.

"If my memory serves me right, the last time the heavy snowfall occurred was during the winter of 1990-91 when the town was cut

off from the rest of the country for more than two weeks," he said.

Another resident, Kavita Sud, 77, said: "The last two days of snowfall in Shimla reminds me of the childhood days when snow-storm dumps heavy snow, causing travel disruptions not for days but for weeks.

"The heavy snowfall at that time forced the authorities to shut down state services, schools, non-essential shops and even banks."

As heavy snow has eluded this erstwhile summer capital of British India in recent times, the "snow manual" of the administration, followed since the British Raj, has virtually been lying in cold storage, admit officials.

The Shimla Snow Manual lists the responsibilities and duties of the administration during snow such as the setting up of control rooms, deploying men and ma-



chinery to clear roads and pathways as well as maintaining power and drinking water supplies.

The local administration, before the onset of winter every year, holds a meeting to review measures

and assign duties to handle any emergency in case of heavy snow.

Officials admit that for the past several decades, this meeting -- called the snow manual meeting -- had become a mere ritual. "Over

the years, the intensity of snowfall in Shimla has decreased. So the snow manual has lost its relevance," admitted an official who did not wish to be named. This time the electricity, landline phones and cable television were snapped in several localities of Shimla owing to falling of trees on supply lines. Water supply was also hampered. Officials say it will days for the restoration of essential services. However, Shimla woke up to a sunny morning on Saturday after three days of snow.

Since a majority of the roads piled with snow and treacherous owing to slippery conditions and early morning frost, the local administration ordered to keep government offices, except essential services, and educational institutions in Shimla district shut. The road leading to the Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital, the state's prominent hospital, is too slippery

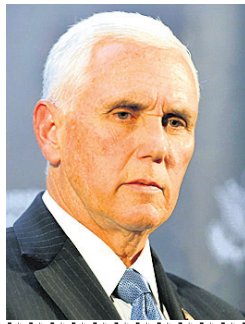
for traffic and pedestrians.

Also the administration has asked tourists to avoid travelling in their vehicles beyond Shimla as the road is slippery after the snowfall. According to the local Met office, in the past two days certain areas of Shimla like the Ridge, the US Club and Jakhu hills received more than 60 cm snowfall.

Although the Shimla Municipal Corporation has started clearing the snow on Cart Road and some VIP roads, most of the other roads are covered in a thick blanket of snow. A journalist said that till the mid 1990s heavy snowfall was a normal feature of Shimla. There used to be four to five spells of heavy snow throughout the winter and in between there were mild to moderate ones. "Now the intensity of snowfall is quite less compared to the past, but the miseries are more," the journalist said.



# international



President Trump is wrong. I had no right to overturn the election. The presidency belongs to the American people, and the American people alone  
MIKE PENCE | FORMER VICE PRESIDENT, US

## OLYMPIC DIPLOMACY PUSH

Chinese President Xi Jinping met the leaders of Serbia, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan Saturday as Beijing used the opening of the Winter Olympics to seize the diplomatic initiative amid simmering tensions with the United States



## of the day quote

We have seen the suspension of the nuclear test, we have seen the suspension of the launch of intercontinental ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. And then what has been done by the US?  
ZHANG JUN | UN AMBASSADOR, CHINA

Unfortunately, the West has not contributed anything toward a solution of this issue (Russia-Ukraine). They are just creating obstacles  
RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | PRESIDENT, TURKEY

We want to launch a revolution by putting an end to (foreign influence) on Islam. Islam is not a religion of foreigners in France, but a French religion that should not depend on foreign money and any authorities abroad  
GERALD DARMANN | INTERIOR MINISTER, FRANCE

# Pak Army's 1971 genocide in B'desh comes into light

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 5: Genocide Watch, a US-based organisation that campaigns against all forms of mass murder, has recognised the crimes committed by the Pakistani forces during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 as genocide, bdnews24 reported. "Genocide Watch recognizes the crimes committed by the Military Forces of Pakistan against the Bengali population in Bangladesh in 1971 as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes," the organisation said in the declaration Thursday in commemoration of 50 years of the genocide.



"Strong evidence supports the conclusion that the crimes committed against the Bengalis of East Pakistan during 1971 were widespread and systematic and carried out by the Pakistani Army, other militia forces, and pan-Islamic political forces." "Conclusive research by internationally recognized genocide experts indicates that the nature, scale and organization of the

These crimes by the Pakistani Forces constituted the crimes against humanity of murder, extermination, deportation or other severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, rape, sexual violence, persecution, enforced disappearance of persons, and other inhumane acts  
GENOCIDE WATCH | NGO, US

Pakistani Military operations demonstrates planning and intentional design by the Pakistani

junta leadership and military command to destroy a substantial part of the Bengali ethnic and national group and a substantial part of the Bengali Hindu religious group," the report said. Gregory Stanton, founder of Genocide Watch, called upon the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution recognising the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh. The declaration also urged member states of the UN to take necessary measures to recognise these crimes in appropriate fora, and to charge surviving leaders of this genocide in national courts with universal jurisdiction.

# Taliban threatening to rip out tongues of journalists



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 5: Reporters Without Borders (RSF) have said journalists and media workers in Afghanistan are facing increasing 'harassment' from the intelligence department and are under pressure from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, Tolo News reported.

RSF said the threats, interrogations and arbitrary arrests of journalists have increased. These actions are in violation of Afghanistan's press law, it said.

According to RSF, since the Islamic Emirate regained power in August last year, at least 50 journalists and media workers have been detained, lasting from several hours to nearly a week.

"Threatening to rip out journalists' tongues in order to prevent them from covering certain subjects is completely unacceptable," said Reza Moini, the head of RSF's Iran-Afghanistan desk. "Journalists must be able to practice their profession without being under a permanent threat of arrest and torture. These unlawful threats, which violate Afghanistan's media legislation, are all the more horrifying for coming at a time of growing harassment and increasingly restrictive rules for the right to news and information."

According to RSF, the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice has also issued a decree in November last year defining certain rules for media in Afghanistan.

The International Federation of Journalists also raised concerns on the status of media in Afghanistan, saying at least 318 media outlets have closed since the fall of the Western-backed government in 33 of 34 provinces in Afghanistan.

# Coups, Covid, Israel issue test AU leaders at summit

The bloc, formed 20 years ago to promote international cooperation and harmonise member states' policies, has struggled to address six coups or attempted coups in Africa over the past 18 months, and the power grabs are high on the summit agenda

REUTERS

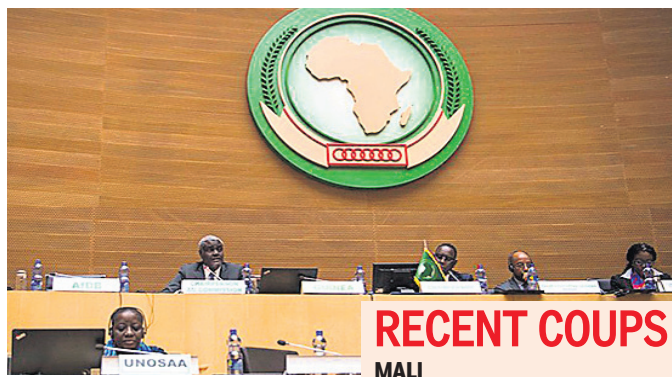
Addis Ababa, Feb 5: Leaders gathered at an African Union (AU) summit called Saturday for the continent to have a bigger role on the international stage amid signs the bloc is struggling to forge a coordinated response to challenges from coups to Covid-19.

While the bloc did move to suspend Burkina Faso, Mali and Sudan following military takeovers, it is unclear whether the ban has had any effect on the countries' new leaders.

AU Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat told leaders at the opening ceremony that the security situation in Africa required the bloc to take a new approach and called for "more active inter-African solidarity".

Differences between members over the bloc's relationship with Israel broke into the open at the ceremony. Faki defended his decision last year to unilaterally accept Israel's request for observer status at the AU, a step that bolsters Israeli ties with the organisation.

Along with Nigeria, Algeria and a Southern African regional bloc, South Africa is pushing for Israel's status to be revoked, according to



## RECENT COUPS

**MALI**  
A group of Malian colonels first seized power in August 2020 by ousting President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. The coup followed anti-government protests over deteriorating security, contested legislative elections and allegations of corruption.

**CHAD**  
Chad's army took power in April 2021 after President Idriss Deby was killed while visiting Chadian troops fighting rebels in the north.

**GUINEA**  
Special forces commander Colonel Mamady Doumbouya led a coup in September 2021 against President Alpha Conde, saying he acted because of poverty and corruption.

**BURKINA FASO**  
The military ousted President Roch Kabore last week, blaming him for failing to contain violence by Islamist militants.

an internal memo prepared for the summit and seen by Reuters. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco and several other countries support Israel's presence, one African diplomat said.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, who spoke at Saturday's ceremony, called for Israel's observer status to be withdrawn. "It is actually a reward that encourages Israel to continue violating international treaties," he said. **ETHIOPIAN WAR, COVID**  
Some observers fear the Israel dispute is shifting attention from pressing issues like the conflict in Ethiopia and unrest in Sudan following a coup in October. "It's been difficult to discuss Ethiopia at the AU level over the last 15 months, let alone have a discussion that is meaningful on issues of state-sponsored abuses, protection and justice," said Caribe Kaneza Nantulya, Africa advocacy director at New York-based Human Rights Watch.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed used his speech to call for a permanent seat for Africa on the UN Security Council and urged the AU to form a continental media

house to counter "negative media representation of Africa". The AU's efforts to combat the pandemic are also on the summit agenda. Governments hope the creation of a continent-wide drug regulator, the African Medicines Agency (AMA), last year might help Africa combat inequities with other regions.

## SHORT TAKES

### US Covid death toll tops 900,000

New York: The US reached the grim milestone of 900,000 coronavirus deaths Friday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. With the national case count topping 76.2 million, the death toll across the US rose to 900,528 as of Friday evening, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the tally. California led the country in Covid-19 deaths, with 80,798 fatalities. Texas reported the second-highest fatalities of 80,459, followed by Florida with 65,993 deaths and New York with 65,578 deaths, the data showed.

### Deputy apologises to PM Morrison

Canberra: Australian Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce Saturday apologised to PM Scott Morrison for calling him "a hypocrite and a liar" and said the latter did not accept his offer to resign. In text messages made public Friday by Nine Newspapers, Joyce said Morrison "is a hypocrite and a liar from my observations and that is over a long time" to former government staffer. "When it came to light a couple of days ago, I rang the Prime Minister immediately," Joyce told reporters. "I apologised. He accepted my apology. I offered my resignation and he did not accept my resignation," Joyce said.

### Over 50 Iranian MPs test positive

Tehran: Some 50 members of Iran's 290-seat parliament have contracted Covid-19, a senior MP said Saturday as the Omicron variant spreads unabated across the country. MP Alireza Salimi, speaking to YJC, a news agency linked to Iran's state TV, said this week's parliamentary session would be held in accordance with health regulations. Parliament was suspended for two weeks last April due to an outbreak among MPs.

### 159 Palestinians hurt in clashes

Ramallah: At least 159 Palestinian protesters were injured during clashes with the Israeli soldiers in the northern West Bank, according to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). The medical teams treated 79 Palestinians injured near the villages of Beita and Beit Dajan, located south and east of Nablus city respectively, the PRCS said in a statement. Among the 79 injured Palestinians were two young men shot by live bullets and moved by ambulance to the main hospital in Nablus, it added.

# Sunak also present at PM's B-Day bash

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, Feb 5: Rishi Sunak, the Indian-origin chancellor of the exchequer in the British government, was allegedly photographed standing beside Prime Minister Boris Johnson at a gathering in the cabinet room of 10 Downing Street (the historic office-cum-residence of a United Kingdom premier) to celebrate Johnson's birthday in June 2020. It is being determined in a police inquiry as to whether this together violated the prevailing Covid-19 rules.

Sunak is visualised as waiting in the wings to mount a challenge in a ruling Conservative party leadership contest, in the event 15 per cent of its MPs in the House of Commons express no confidence in Johnson.

## PARTYGATE SCANDAL



The photo reportedly shows the head of government holding a can of Estrella beer, with Sunak next to him. Earlier, reliable media reports indicated there was cake cutting and eating at the event, with Johnson's wife Carrie attending as well.

Sunak, when asked about the surprise birthday party in an interview by BBC, said he had been in the cabinet room "100, 200, God knows how many times". Adding: "You are

Speculations are arising as to whether Sunak's attendance will affect his prospective candidature as PM

asking me about something that happened almost two years ago."

In short, he neither confirmed nor denied he was there. It remains to be seen whether a police investigation currently underway finds him or Johnson culpable in respect to what the UK PM's office claimed to have been an impromptu bash. It has, however, acknowledged there was a surprise birthday celebration organised by Carrie Johnson, maintaining the prime minister stayed at it for only 10 minutes.

## AFTER FIVE DAYS

# Rescuers inch nearer to boy stuck in well

REUTERS

Rabat, Feb 5: Rescuers Saturday dug to within a few metres of reaching a young boy who has been trapped for five days in a well in northern Morocco, a delicate and dangerous operation constantly delayed by rocks and imperilled by the threat of landslides.

Workers with mechanical diggers have been trying round the clock to rescue the 5-year-old child, Rayan Awram, after he fell into a 32-metre (100-foot) deep well in the hills near Chefchaouen Tuesday.

"We have two metres more to dig to reach Rayan and we hope we will not encounter rocks," lead rescuer Thamarani Abdelhadi told reporters at the site Saturday afternoon.

He said it was difficult to determine the child's health condition because a camera that has been dropped down the well shows him lying on his side, but he added "we hope we will rescue him alive".

It was also unclear how long the digging will take due to difficulties relating to rocks and the danger of landslides, he said.

Pictures on Moroccan media have shown Rayan huddled at the bottom of the disused well, which narrows as it descends from 45 cm wide at the top, preventing rescuers from descending.

Workers in helmets and high-visibility vests carried stretchers, ropes, tackle and other equipment



down into a pit they have dug parallel to the well.

Friday they began carefully excavating a horizontal tunnel towards the child, sometimes being ordered out to stabilise the earth. The work grew more difficult as they encountered rocks between the trench and the well, a witness said.

"People who love us are sparing no effort to save my child," said the child's father in a tired, barely audible voice, as he stood watching rescue efforts Friday night. "We pray this will be the day of his rescue," he said.

A male relative of the boy told Reuters TV that the family had first realised he was missing when they heard muffled crying and lowered a phone with its light and camera on to locate him.

## FREEDOM CONVOY



Demonstrators rally against provincial and federal Covid-19 vaccine mandates and in support of Ottawa protestors outside the Manitoba Legislature in Winnipeg, Manitoba

# Olympics burst into life under shadow of Covid, conflict

The scintillating opening ceremony ended with a member of China's Uyghur minority - whose treatment is the focus of international human rights criticism - helping to light the Olympic cauldron, hours after Xi announced a new strategic alliance with visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin

REUTERS

Beijing, Feb 5: Chinese President Xi Jinping opened a Beijing Winter Olympics Friday that not only bear the mark of the global coronavirus pandemic but are also mixing sport and global politics as few others have since the era of the Cold War.

Three thousand performers took to a stage comprising 11,600 sq metres of high-definition LED screens in the famed Bird's Nest stadium, before a crowd thinned out by Covid-19 restrictions.

Dancers poured in waving glowing green stalks to mark the first day of spring on the Chinese calendar, followed by an explosion of



white and green fireworks that spelled the word "Spring".

The lighting of the stadium cauldron by the last athlete in the torch relay, their identity kept secret until the last moment, usually provides

the climax at the end of the Olympic opening ceremony, and this one proved especially significant.

China's treatment of the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang - which Washington deems genocide - was

By selecting a Uyghur athlete to light the torch, China is trying to address criticism by the West about genocide or persecution of the Uyghurs. But I don't think this can have much effect on the West, which tends to think most of what China puts up is a show anyway  
MA HAYUN | EXPERT ON XINJIANG

the trigger for a diplomatic boycott by several Western countries including the United States.

China rejects allegations of human rights abuses and sought

to convey a spirit of inclusion during the ceremony, in which the Chinese flag was passed among 56 people representing its ethnic groups before being raised for the national anthem.

With China still sticking to a "zero Covid" policy despite the Omicron variant spreading fast across the globe, organisers decided last month not to sell tickets to the public, kept outside a "closed loop" of competitors and other personnel.

Though smaller in scale than the 2008 Games, the Beijing Winter Olympics are being staged by a China that is much more prosperous, powerful, confident and confrontational under Xi.



## of the day quote

I have neither given my consent, nor sought the removal of Suhail Sameer from the Board of BharatPe, and I fully support his continuance on the Board

**SHASHVAT MANSUKHBHAI NAKRANI** | CO-FOUNDER, BHARATPE

We're certainly happy to work with our friends and partners in India to sign the kind of long-term contracts that allow a large part of the energy demand to be de-risked from a price perspective

**MONTE DOBSON** | CEO, EXXONMOBIL GAS

We continue to attract good talent and over last few months have strengthened the leadership team further; our CIO and Head - Digital Banking have already joined while CFO and Head - Internal audit are joining in coming months

**ITTIRA DAVIS** | MD&CEO, UJIVAN SFB

## SHORT TAKES

### Pak, China to ink \$10-15bn pacts

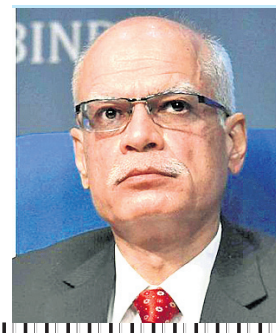
**New Delhi:** Pakistan and China are all set to sign different agreements worth \$10-15 billion during the ongoing visit of Pak Prime Minister Imran Khan to China, including rollover of \$4 billion deposits, fresh loan of \$4 billion, and other projects. The News reported. However, both sides have so far been unable to make progress on the much-delayed multibillion-dollar project of Mainline-1 (ML-1) despite making efforts, as the financing agreement has not yet been signed. Pakistan's federal cabinet has also granted approval for signing of much-awaited industrial cooperation between the two countries under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). While the parties are proactively promoting, facilitating and executing the long-term industrial development plan, the CPEC is a framework of regional connectivity, infrastructure development, and industrial cooperation which will not only benefit the parties but also have a positive impact in the region.

### IndusInd moves NCLT against Zee

**New Delhi:** Private sector lender IndusInd Bank has filed a plea before NCLT to initiate insolvency proceedings against Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL). IndusInd Bank, in its plea before the Mumbai bench of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has claimed a default of ₹83.08 crore against the media and entertainment firm, ZEEL said in a late evening regulatory updates Friday. An application has been filed... By IndusInd Bank Ltd, claiming to be a Financial Creditor, before the NCLT, Mumbai for initiation of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against the company, claiming a default of ₹83.08 crore, it said.

### Paytm net loss widens in Dec

**Mumbai:** India's One 97 Communications Ltd, the parent of fintech firm Paytm, reported 45% rise in quarterly net loss Friday even as revenue rose. In its second earnings since it went public last year, Paytm posted a consolidated net loss of ₹7.79 billion for the quarter ended December, compared with ₹5.36 billion in the same period a year earlier. Revenue in the quarter surged 77% to 15.33 billion rupees. Since its listing in November, the stock has more than halved to ₹953.30 as of Friday's close, after hitting a record low of Rs 875 last week.



Maybe we will wait another year to improve the tax structure a little more

**TARUN BAJAJ** | REVENUE SECRETARY

### JIO FACES SERVICE OUTAGE IN MUMBAI

Reliance Jio's telecom services have been affected since Saturday morning in the financial capital, with many users complaining of inability to connect calls. The problem was first reported at about noon across the city with users complaining of getting a message saying a subscriber is not registered on the network. A phased restoration of services has started and subscribers are being requested to restart their phones



## PROVISIONS DROP

# SBI Q3 profit zooms over 62%

**STATE BANK OF INDIA'S CREDIT GROWTH IS LIKELY TO BE AT 9 PER CENT BY THE END OF THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR, SAID CHAIRMAN DINESH KHARA**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 5:** The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) Saturday reported 62.27 per cent jump in standalone net profit at Rs 8,432 crore for the quarter ended December 2021, helped by lower provisions.

Chairman Dinesh Khara said the bank has delivered consistently improving outcomes in the business, profitability and asset quality parameters.

"We have a decent interest income. Treasury income has been a bit of an issue but nevertheless in the other income we have seen a good trend and also lower provisions because of the better asset quality," Khara told reporters.



It has created sufficient contingency provisions against the restructured book to insulate the balance sheet from any future shocks arising out of uncertainties.

During the quarter, the bank made an additional provision of Rs 1,700 crore as a prudent measure, he said. Domestic net interest margin (NIM) improved to 3.40 per cent as against 3.34 per cent in the year-ago period.

Gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio reduced to 4.50 per cent from 4.77 per cent. Net NPA ratio stood at 1.34 per cent as against 1.23 per cent.

"We don't have any challenge on the asset quality front. We have adequately insulated our balance sheet from any future shocks also," Khara said. Slippage ratio for the quarter was at 0.37 per cent and credit cost stood at 0.49 per cent. Fresh slippages in the quarter were at Rs 2,334 crore. Recovery and upgradation stood at Rs 2,306 crore as against Rs 5,657 crore in the year-ago quarter.

The bank's restructuring under Covid resolution plan-1.0 and 2.0 stood at Rs 32,895 crore, which is 1.2 per cent of the loan book.

Provision coverage ratio (PCR) as at December-end quarter stood at 88.32 per cent.

HIGHEST EVER QUARTERLY PROFIT REPORTED BY THE LENDER

STANDALONE NET PROFIT OF ₹5,196 CRORE IN THE SAME PERIOD

NET INTEREST INCOME SURGED 6.48% TO ₹30,687 CRORE

CAPITAL ADEQUACY RATIO AS AT THE END OF DEC QUARTER WAS AT 13.23%

### Oldest Khadi shop banned from selling over fake products

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 5:** The nearly seven-decades-old 'Khadi Emporium' has been banned for selling fake Khadi products by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), a statement said Saturday.

The commission, which is under the Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy against sale of spurious or non-Khadi products in recent years and took the action against the oldest Khadi institution, the official statement said.

The action came after KVIC found that the said Khadi Emporium at Dr DN Road was selling non-Khadi products in the guise of genuine Khadi. During routine inspection, KVIC officials collected samples from the Emporium that were found to be non-Khadi products, the statement said.

The statement said KVIC issued a legal notice to Mumbai Khadi & Village Industries Association (MKVIA), which was running the emporium, for flouting the norms of "Khadi Certificate" and "Khadi Mark Certificate" issued by the Commission. "With cancellation of the registration, Khadi Emporium ceases to be a genuine Khadi Outlet and is no longer permitted to sell Khadi products from the Emporium," the statement said.

The KVIC is also contemplating legal action against the MKVIA for criminal breach of trust and cheating the public at large by misusing the credibility and popularity of brand Khadi, it added.

Last year, KVIC also forced online shopping portals - Amazon, Flipkart and Snapdeal - to take down 140 web links that were selling non-Khadi products as "Khadi".

# Step up capex for economic growth, FM tells corporates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 5:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday exhorted India Inc to take advantage of announcements made in Budget and "quickly" step up capex so that the virtuous cycle of investment gathers momentum.

Addressing members of CII, she said increase in capex in the Budget was done with twin objectives of supporting sustained growth and crowd in private investment.

She asserted that this is the right time for investment and industry should not lose this opportunity.

"Post the pandemic with all the reshuffling happening, reset happening in the ways in which you do your business and also with that step of October 2019 in which that one condition was please start reducing by March 2023 is also now extended by one more year," she said.

The Budget 2022-23 presented on February 1 proposed that the concessional 15 per cent corporate tax rate would be available for one more year till March 2024 for newly incorporated manufacturing units.



I would just want to green flag those areas before you and call upon the industry to quickly join and help the virtuous cycle to gain traction

**Nirmala Sitharaman** | Finance Minister

The government in September 2019 slashed corporate tax rate for companies that do not avail of any tax incentive, to 22 per cent. New manufacturing companies have to pay at an even lower corporate tax rate of 15 per cent.

The government slashed corporate tax rate to provide incentive for the private sector to ramp up investment which was muted for last few years. However, this got further aggravated with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Stressing that many sectors have been opened up, she said, there are immense opportunities in the sunrise sectors and New Age sectors like bulk drugs vaccines, and genome.

The government has hiked public investment by as much as 35.4 per cent to Rs 7.5 lakh crore or 2.9 per cent of the GDP in the Budget 2023-24.

She urged industry not to lose this opportunity for India to reach a higher level of industrialization and manufacturing in India.



One of Odisha's leading jewellery brands Arundhati Jewellers unveiled its Platinum jewellery collection at the Satyanagar Branch in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Apart from this, special discounts have also been announced under Wedding Fest Offer for regular gold and diamond ornaments. MD Brahmanand Meher thanked the attendees for connecting with the event and invited them to have a glimpse of the craftsmanship of Arundhati Jewellers

OP PHOTO

# Vande Bharat trains: ₹40K cr business opportunity, jobs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Feb 5:** Rolling out 400 Vande Bharat Express trains is about Rs 40,000 crore of business coupled with jobs and other spin-off benefits, said senior officials - present and past -- of Indian Railways

Presenting the Union Budget for 2022-23, Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said 400 new energy efficient Vande Bharat trains will be introduced in three years.

The Indian Railways officials preferring anonymity told IANS that 400 Vande Bharat trains over the next three years is not just headline catching announcement. It is about Rs 40,000 crore business opportunity that would also create 15,000 jobs and several spin-off benefits.



I would think that a more realistic target of say 100-150 trains in three years would have been better. This target itself would need very concerted and committed action by railway executives, particularly at ICF

**SUDHANSHU MANI** | RETIRED GENERAL MANAGER, ICF AND THE CREATOR OF VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

The train has only about 15 per cent import content which will further go down if production volumes increase, officials told IANS earlier.

However, how the government is going to achieve its target of 400 Vande Bharat Express trains over the next three years is the Rs 40,000 crore question.

While it is really an ambitious target, it can be achieved in a staggered manner with the government giving better clarity on its plans, officials said.

Indian Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the upgraded Vande Bharat train is expected to be ready for tests in April and commercial production is expected to start in August/September, 2022.

The other question is the availability of the vendors. Unless the government gives a clear roadmap, vendors may not ramp up their production capacity, officials said.

"The supply chain will take time to gear up. They can supply only at a steady rate. Out of the 400 trains, during the first year only 20 trains can be rolled out and 380 trains in the remaining two years is not possible," the official added.

Further vendors and ICF officials are reluctant to touch the Vande Bharat train project after the witch hunt in the form of vigilance enquiry that was conducted and concluded recently without finding any discrepancy.

According to officials, there needs to be long term contracts -- say 60 trains for the next 10 years -- only then vendors can set up production facilities.

The Vande Bharat Express is a semi-high speed train designed, developed and built by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) at a frugal outlay of Rs 100 crore

It is one classic example of 'Make in India' and far cheaper than similar trains that are rolled out by foreign companies, said an official

Presently there are only two Vande Bharat trains that are running -- Delhi to Varanasi and Delhi to Katra

Bharat Express is the first train that is run without a pair," a senior official at ICF told IANS with pride.

# Amazon surges with record \$190bn profit



REUTERS

**New York, Feb 5:** A day after Facebook owner Meta Platforms suffered the deepest loss of stock market value in history for a US company, Amazon logged the greatest ever one-day increase in value.

Shares of the online retail and cloud computing giant surged 13.5% Friday following its blowout quarterly report, expanding its market capitalization by around \$190 billion by the end of trading.

That beat Apple Inc's record \$181 billion one-day gain in stock market value January 28 following the iPhone maker's own blockbuster quarterly report, according to Refinitiv data.

Amazon is now valued at about \$1.6 trillion. With Meta Platforms' stock slipping 0.3% Friday, its value stood at about \$660 billion.

"After fighting the post-lockdown blues in 2021, we believe Amazon's fortunes have the potential to improve as 2022 unfolds," Monness Crespi Hardt analyst Brian White wrote in a research note. "Amazon is uniquely positioned to exit this crisis as one of the biggest beneficiaries of accelerated digital transformation."

Amazon's shares jumped after the firm reported better-than-expected profits

The company is also hiking the price of its annual US Prime subscriptions by 17%

Amazon's surge comes a day after Meta Platforms' stock market value plunged more than \$200 billion

Retail investors appeared to use Amazon's rally to take profits. Data on Fidelity's website showed Amazon was the most traded stock among its customers Friday, with sell orders outnumbering buy orders by more than two to one.

The size of the increase in Amazon's value eclipsed the market capitalisations of companies including AT&T Inc, Morgan Stanley and Netflix Inc.

Apple, Microsoft Corp and Google owner Alphabet Inc remain Wall Street's most valuable companies, with market capitalisations of \$2.8 trillion, \$2.3 trillion and \$1.9 trillion, respectively, according to Refinitiv.

Amazon's stock price remains down around 15% from its record high close of \$3,731.41 in July.

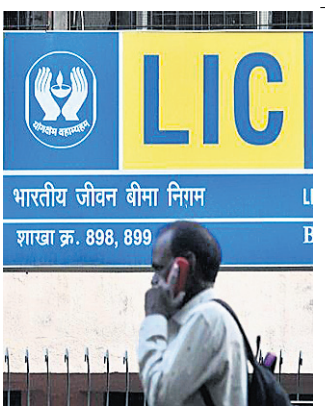
## COVID RELIEF

# LIC offers chance to revive lapsed policies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 5:** IPO-bound Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched a campaign for revival of individual lapsed policies.

Policies, which are in a lapsed condition during the premium paying term and not completed policy term, are eligible to be revived in this campaign, which will begin from February 7 and March 25, 2022, a press release said Saturday.



While the current Covid-19 pandemic scenario has emphasised the need for mortality protection, this campaign is a good opportunity for LIC's policyholders to revive their policies, restore life cover and ensure financial security for their family, the state-run insurer said in the release.

It said that concessions are being offered in late fee for other than term assurance and high risk plans, depending on the total premiums paid.

There are no concessions on medical requirements. Eligible health and micro insurance plans also qualify for the concession in late fee, the release said.

For conventional and health policies with a total receivable premium of up to Rs one lakh, the insurer is offering a 20 per cent concession in late fee, with a maximum limit of Rs 2,000. Similarly, for a premium amount of above Rs 3 lakh, concession offered is 30 per cent, with a cap of Rs 3,000.

The insurer is offering a full concession in late fee for micro-insurance plans.

Under the campaign, policies of specific eligible plans can be revived within five years from the date of the first unpaid premium, subject to certain terms and conditions, the release said.



# India seek new template

ODI SERIES AGAINST WEST INDIES IS CRUCIAL, IT IS THE START OF PREPARATIONS FOR 2023 WC

AGENCIES

**Ahmedabad, Feb 5:** It couldn't have been a more auspicious start for Rohit Sharma's tenure as full time white ball captain. He will be leading out India for their 1000th ODI when the three-match series against the West Indies gets underway at the Narendra Modi Stadium here Sunday.

The task before Rohit is quite simple, but in the long run arduous too. He along with Rahul Dravid will have to prepare the template keeping in mind the 2023 World Cup. And the first among those is to solve the 'middle-order muddle' as many has called it.

After a rude reality check against a weak South African side in the away series, India are now back in familiar settings. The 'Rohit-Dravid' duo over the course of the next few months will underline the 'Men in Blue's' philosophy in the 50-over format after it became clear that some rejigging is needed as a part of course correction. And to do that Rohit will have to lead from the front. He will also have to depend on Ishan Kishan who will open the batting with him.

Rohit on his day can take any attack to cleaners and the West Indies', rather inexperienced one, would be no exception and ditto for Kishan. However, the worry for India is the middle-order.

In the series against South Africa, save Rishabh Pant's knock in the second game, the middle-order crumbled on all the three occasions. The need of the hour is to have impactful players in it. So it is the perfect chance for Suryakumar Yadav and Deepak Hooda to impress the national selectors. Also Virat Kohli will have to play an influential role.

In terms of bowling, left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, is back in the ODI squad. However, keeping in mind the mauling Yadav has always received at the hands of



**LAST MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS:** Head coach Rahul Dravid gestures as he talks to the Indian players during the training session, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Windies skipper Kieron Pollard, there is every possibility that India will field young Jodhpur-born go-gly bowler Ravi Bishnoi.

In the absence of key pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, who have been rested, the bowling unit is expected to be led by 'Palghar Express' Shardul Thakur, who shone in the Johannesburg Test against South Africa.

Meanwhile, West Indies would come into the contest after their confidence boosting T20 series win over England. They have a game-changer like Nicholas Pooran, but others will have to support him. Former skipper Jason Holder will also have to come to the party.

INDIA STATS TRIVIA	
<b>ODIs-999, Wins-518, Losses-431, Ties-9, No result-41</b>	<b>Individual highlights</b>
<b>Highest total:</b> 418/5 in 50 overs vs West Indies at Indore, December 8, 2011	<b>Most matches</b> Sachin Tendulkar 463
<b>Lowest total:</b> 54 all out in 26.3 overs vs Sri Lanka at Sharjah, October 29, 2000.	<b>Most runs</b> Sachin Tendulkar 18,426 runs
<b>Largest margin of victory:</b> 257 runs vs Bermuda at Port of Spain, March 19, 2007	<b>Highest Individual score</b> Rohit Sharma 264 vs Sri Lanka
<b>Smallest margin:</b> 1 run vs NZ at Wellington, March 6, 1990	<b>Most 100s</b> Sachin Tendulkar 49
1 run vs SL at Colombo (Premadasa), July 25, 1993;	<b>Most 50s</b> Sachin Tendulkar 96
1 run vs SA at Jaipur, February 21, 2010;	<b>Most zeros</b> Sachin Tendulkar 20
1 run vs SA at Johannesburg, January 15, 2011.	<b>Most wickets</b> Anil Kumble 334
	<b>Best bowling figures</b> Stuart Binny 6/4 vs Bangladesh, June 2014
	<b>Most catches</b> M Azharuddin 156 catches

NEW SKIPPER TO TAKE FORWARD KOHLI'S VISION

## Individuals require clarity in roles: Rohit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Feb 5:** India's new ODI captain Rohit Sharma said Saturday that Ishan Kishan will open alongside him in the first ODI against the West Indies. Rohit said the youngster is the only available option for the team with late entrant Mayank Agarwal serving his mandatory quarantine period. However, while talking to reporters, he avoided a number of tricky questions.



**When Virat was captaining, I was the vice-captain, so we pretty much went about the team in similar fashion. I just have to take it from where he (Virat) left. There is nothing I need to change drastically**

ROHIT SHARMA

"Ishan Kishan is the only option we have and he will open with me," Rohit said on the eve of the series-opener. "Mayank was added to the squad and he is still in isolation. He is yet to finish his quarantine," added the new skipper.

Rohit also clarified that the Covid-19 positive trio of Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer and Rituraj Gaikwad are still in isolation and may miss the entire series. "I have no idea," Rohit said when asked

when the trio would be available. In Covid-19 times, one might have to play in a position which isn't exactly his preferred one, said the captain, who expects the players to be flexible.

"These are times that we live in and the boys understand that. Opportunity can come at any point and they have to be ready for it. But for the team, they have to do it and this is something that we have spoken at length. I have made it clear with everyone that this is the possible situation," informed Rohit.

Rohit also admitted that some individuals in the team needed 'role clarity' but he would prefer carrying on from where his predecessor Virat Kohli had left rather than trying to reinvent the wheel.

"It is always important that everyone comes together and plays the role that has been given to them. What is important for us, moving forward is the role clarity of certain individuals in the squad," Rohit said at the virtual press conference. "I think, if we can, you know, put that in place and talk to the individual about it, I think, we can get what we want from them," he added.

Rohit believes that the recent 0-3 loss against South Africa is an aberration and there is no need to press the panic button.

"Look, there is not a lot that we need to change, we just need to adapt to different situations of the game that has been presented in front of us. We have played good ODI cricket over the course of a few years. So a single series defeat doesn't mean that we get panicky," Rohit said.

Rohit also made clear that the team management would be playing Kuldeep Yadav along with Yuzvendra Chahal. "It is certainly on my mind to get them back together, Kuldeep specially, he hasn't played since IPL. He hasn't played a lot of games after that, so we want to get him in slowly," Rohit pointed out.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Emil in final

**Pune:** Finland youngster Emil Ruusuvaara earned a shot at his maiden ATP World Tour title with a hard-fought victory over a fighting Kamil Majchrzak in the semifinal of the Tata Open tennis tournament here Saturday. Emil won the match 6-3, 7-6 (7-0) in 106 minutes. After losing the first set, Kamil was serving for the second, but lost his serve. He then faded in the tie-breaker.

#### Cairns has cancer

**Christchurch:** Former New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns revealed Saturday that he has been diagnosed with bowel cancer. The 51-year-old had undergone four open heart surgeries but was left paralysed by a spinal stroke on the operating table five months ago. "I was told yesterday I have bowel cancer... Big shock and not what I was expecting," Cairns, who played 62 Tests and 215 ODIs for New Zealand said on social media.

#### Aditi makes cut

**Fort Myers (US):** Aditi Ashok fired two birdies in the last four holes to make the cut at the LPGA Drive On Championship. Aditi, who shot 72 in the first round, was staring at the possibility of an early exit when she was 1-over for the second day after 14 holes. Aditi birdied the sixth and then holed a clutch putt on the ninth, her 18th and final hole of the second round and ended the day tied-61st which was right on the cut-line.

#### Oz finish 3rd

**Osbourne (Antigua):** A fine all-round performance from Nivethan Radhakrishnan (66, 95b, 7x4 and three wickets) fired Australia to third place in the ICC Under 19 World Cup with a two-wicket win over Afghanistan. The all-rounder restricted Afghanistan to 201 all out and then played a vital knock to take his team over the line. When the Asian team battled, Ijaz Ahmad Ahmadzai (81, 79b, 5x4, 5x6) played a vital knock to take his team past the 200-run mark. William Salzmann (3/43) bowled well for the Aussies. When Australia batted Campbell Kellaway (51) scored a vital half century.

## 1st WG gold for Johaug Raj, Ravi restrict England to 189

AGENCIES

**Beijing, Feb 5:** Cross-country skier Therese Johaug of Norway won Saturday the first gold medal of the Winter Games (WG) in the women's 15km skiathlon. Johaug fought wind and frigid temperatures to win by skiing away from a chase group of four. Russian athlete Natalia Nepryaeva took silver while the bronze went to Teresa Stadlober of Austria.

Johaug crossed the line with her arms in the air and a huge smile on her face. She has 10 World Championship titles but has never won an individual Olympic gold medal.

However later in the day, Irene Scouten overshadowed Johaug's feat. She gave the mighty Dutch a gold medal in the first speedskating event of the Winter Games, breaking a 20-year-old Olympic record in the women's 3,000 metres Saturday. Skating in the last of 10 pairs, Schouten turned in a blazing final

lap to post the winning time of 3 minutes, 56.93 seconds. It broke the previous Olympic mark of 3:57.70, set by Germany's Claudia Pechstein at the 2002 Salt Lake City Games.

Italy's Francesca Lollobrigida, pushing Schouten all the way in the final pair, held on for the silver in 3:58.06. The three-time Olympian is the great-niece of 94-year-old acrobat Gina Lollobrigida, who was an international star in the 1950s and '60s. The bronze went to Canada's Isabelle Weidemann in 3:58.64.

Martina Sablikova of the Czech Republic, the winner of six Olympic medals including three golds, held the top spot with two pairs to go but failed to make the podium. She wound up fourth in 4:00.34 seconds.

Meanwhile Covid-19 continued to be a spoilsport with 45 new positive cases being reported on the day. Athletes and officials accounted for 25 of the cases, with 20 detected in people arriving at the airport here and five more in daily PCR tests taken by everyone at the games

## PACE BOWLERS PUT INDIA ON THE CUSP OF VICTORY IN THE UNDER-19 WORLD CUP FINAL

AGENCIES

**North Sound (Antigua), Feb 5:** India were all over England before a gritty 95 (116b, 12x4) by James Rew saved his team the blushes. It was Rew who singlehandedly lifted England to 189 all out in the final of the U-19 World Cup here Saturday. Bowling his medium pacers to deadly effect, Raj Bawa (5/31) ran through the English middle-order after the in-from left-arm seamer Ravi Kumar (4/34) laid their opponents low with two early blows.

India kept taking wickets at regular intervals but not for once did the intensity of the team dropped. However, Rew and James Sales (34 n o) defied India with their 93-run eight-wicket stand and gave some respectability to the scoreboard.

The Yash Dhull-led India struck as early as the second over when Ravi sent back the dangerous Jacob



Raj Bawa



Ravi Kumar

Bethell (2) cheaply. The early blow did not have any impact on George

Thomas (27) as he smashed Rajvardhan Hangargekar for 14

runs, including two fours and a six over deep mid-wicket, in the very next over.

However, Ravi struck again, this time dismantling the stumps of English skipper Tom Prest (0) at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. It was 38 for two and it soon became 37 for three when Bawa got Thomas.

Wickets continued to fall at regular intervals and at 91 for seven, a total of 150-plus looked distant. However, Rew and Sales batted well to stitch a partnership. At one point of time it appeared that England will go past 200. However, Kumar returned to dismiss the well set Rew to dash England's hopes. Three balls later he again picked up another wicket and Sales was left high and dry.

**Brief scores:** England 189 all out in 44.5 overs (James Rew 95, Raj Bawa 5/31, Ravi Kumar 4/34). Match to continue

## PEEVED AFTER OFFERED SHORT-TERM CONTRACT BY CA LANGER QUIT IN A HUFF

AGENCIES

**Melbourne, Feb 5:** Australian men's cricket coach Justin Langer announced his surprise resignation Saturday, just weeks after trouncing arch rivals England in a lop-sided Ashes series and months after winning the T20 World Cup. The 51-year-old walked away from the top management job in Australian sports after a sometimes difficult relationship with players and acrimonious talks with governing body Cricket Australia (CA).

The coach is said to have bristled at being asked to effectively reapply for his job and being offered a short-term contract, despite a stellar record that culminated in a 4-0 Ashes victory and Australia being ranked the world's No.1 Test team.

Sports management company DSEG announced Langer's departure in a terse statement. It said "our client Justin Langer has this (Saturday) morning tendered his resignation as coach of the Australian men's cricket team". "The resignation follows a meeting with Cricket Australia last (Friday) evening. The resignation is effective immediately," it added.

CA confirmed the news, but did not immediately comment. As a player, Langer's searing in-



**SHOCKING MOVE:** Justin Langer has resigned from the position of head coach

tensity drove him to greatness with the bat. But it also appeared to play a role in his downfall, despite his success reviving the scandal-tainted side's fortunes.

Langer took the job in 2018, with Australian cricket at its lowest ebb for decades in the wake of a cheating affair. He restored pride in his beloved baggy green cap, overseeing a string of wins.

As importantly, he curbed the toxic win-at-all-costs culture that led to the team's ball-tampering disgrace in Cape Town four years ago against South Africa.

Given his record, former teammate Ricky Ponting was incredulous that Langer's future when his contract runs out mid-year was even up for discussion.

"On performance, there is absolutely no way that Justin (Langer) cannot continue on as head coach of this Australian cricket team," Ponting had said Friday evening.

However, somewhere along the way, Langer lost support in the dressing room, with disgruntled players complaining anonymously to local media about his 'head-master-like' leadership style.

## 2nd half show helps BFC tame stubborn JFC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bambolim (Goa), Feb 5:** Bengaluru FC (BFC) made it three wins on the trot to move to the third spot, riding a come-from-behind 3-1 victory over Jamshedpur FC (JFC) in their ISL encounter at the Athletic Stadium here Saturday.

Daniel Chima Chukwu had given Jamshedpur the lead inside the first minute but BFC made a roaring comeback in the second half with Cleiton Silva (62nd, 90th) scoring twice on after Sunil Chhetri's equaliser in the 55th minute.

Chhetri scored his 49th goal, equalling Hyderabad FC's Bart Ogbeche who became the all-time highest scorer of the ISL the other day with 49 strikes. With this victory BFC stretched their unbeaten run to eight games. BFC now have 23 points from 15 games, same as Kerala Blasters who are second due to better goal difference. Jamshedpur dropped to fourth with the loss with 22 points from 13 matches.

If the first half belonged to JFC, then it was all BFC in the second half. In fact BFC could have won by a bigger margin if they had utilised all the chances that came their way.

## Man United stunned

AGENCIES

**Manchester, Feb 5:** Manager Ralf Rangnick claimed Manchester United were robbed by VAR after his side suffered a shock FA Cup exit at the hands of Championship club Middlesbrough who won 8-7 on penalties after regulation time ended in a 1-1 draw late Friday night.

Rangnick's team crashed out in the fourth round after Anthony Elanga blazed his spot-kick over the bar in a nerve-jangling shoot-out at Old Trafford. Swedish teenager Elanga was the only player from either team to miss in the shoot-out, leaving the forward holding his head in disbelief as Middlesbrough celebrated their stunning victory.

Jadon Sancho had put United ahead in the first half, but Matt Crooks grabbed a controversial equaliser after the interval to set the stage for Middlesbrough's memorable upset. Crooks' goal was allowed to stand despite Duncan Watmore controlling the ball with his hand before providing the assist.

"We conceded a goal which I don't understand why it stood. He (Watmore) controlled it (ball) with his hand," Rangnick said. "In the moment when they scored, it was clear that VAR would not allow this goal to stand," he added.

Even Middlesbrough boss Chris Wilder thought the goal would be ruled out. He said, "I thought

straight away it was handball. I thought it would be chalked out and was delighted it wasn't. The FA Cup is alive and kicking!"



A dejected Cristiano Ronaldo troops off the field after the loss against Middlesbrough

Cristiano Ronaldo had missed a first half spot-kick for United, who have now lost seven of their last eight penalty shoot-outs, including last season's Europa League final against Villarreal. Man United had 30 shots on goal in total but lacked the composure and cutting edge required to kill off supposedly inferior opponents.

"I'm incredibly disappointed," Rangnick lamented. "We should have won and killed off the game in the first half. Crossbar, post, missed penalty and numerous chances. It should have been 2-0 or 3-0 at the interval."

Man U are without a major trophy in five years and their hopes of ending that drought are dwindling.