



## SMUGGLING BID FOILED

3 Pakistani intruders were killed by BSF as it scuttled a major narcotic smuggling bid in Samba sector of J&K

NATIONAL P9



## SUNAK ADMITS

Rishi Sunak has admitted to attending Boris Johnson's lockdown birthday party in 2020

INTERNATIONAL P10



## INDIA WIN 1000TH ODI

India beat West Indies in the first ODI, which happens to be the country's 1000th, by 6 wickets in Ahmedabad

SPORTS P12

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## EC extends ban on roadshows

**New Delhi:** The Election Commission (EC) Sunday extended the ban on roadshows, 'pad yatras', cycle and vehicle rallies but relaxed norms for indoor and outdoor political meets for polls. In a statement, the EC said restrictions regarding outdoor meetings, indoor meetings, rallies will be further relaxed subject to condition that the number of persons attending these events will be limited to maximum of 50 per cent of the capacity of indoor halls and 30 per cent of the open ground capacity. Maximum number of persons permissible for door-to-door campaigning fixed at 20 will remain as before. Ban on campaign between 8pm and 8am will also continue as before, the EC said.

MORE P7

## Eminent Odissi singer Damodar Hota dies at 87



**Bhubaneswar:** Eminent Odissi classical singer Pandit Damodar Hota died here Sunday due to old age-related ailments, his family said. The renowned Hindustani vocalist from Odisha was 87. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled his death and said his mortal remains will be cremated with full state honours. "Pandit Hota's contribution to Indian classical music will be remembered for posterity," he said, extending condolences to the bereaved family. Born December 25, 1935 in Puri, Pandit Hota was trained in Odissi and Hindustani classical music from Guru Nrusinghanatha Khuntia, while Guru Kashinath Barika taught him to master tabla and mardala. The Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi honoured Pandit Hota with Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja Award.

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## STRAINING EVERY NERVE



Jin Boyang of China competes in the men's team free skate programme during the figure skating competition at the 2022 Winter Olympics, Sunday

## Full office attendance for Central govt employees

■ Union minister Jitendra Singh says the decision was taken in view of a decline in number of coronavirus cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** Union minister Jitendra Singh has said full office attendance will be resumed for all central government employees from Monday.

The decision was taken in view of a decline in the number of coronavirus cases, he said Sunday.

"A review of the pandemic situation was done today and in view of a decline in the number of Covid cases as well as a decline in the positivity rate, it has been decided that full office attendance shall be resumed from tomorrow and employees at all levels, without any exemption, shall attend office on a regular basis with effect from

February 7, 2022," the minister of state for personnel said.

He said the heads of the departments shall, however, ensure that the employees wear face masks at all times and continue to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour.

The Centre had, January 31, extended the work-from-home arrangement for 50 per cent of its employees below the level of under secretary till February 15.

"But after obtaining inputs from the relevant quarters and a review of the situation, a fresh office memorandum has been issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), informing that all the employees at all levels, without any exemption, will report to office from tomorrow, that is, February 7," Singh said.

There will be no "work-from-home" option for any employee anymore, he added.

## MELODY QUEEN FALLS SILENT



LATA MANGESHKAR 1929-2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 6:** Singing legend Lata Mangeshkar, the voice of generations of Indians and one of the biggest music icons of the country, died Sunday due to multiple organ failure, her sister Usha Mangeshkar and doctors treating her said. She was 92.

"She is no more. She died in the morning," Usha Mangeshkar told PTI. "Lata died at 8.12 am due to multi-organ failure after over 28 days of COVID-19 diagnosis," Dr Pratit Samdani, who was treating the veteran singer at the city's Breach Candy hospital here, told reporters.

The singing legend was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Breach Candy Hospital in South Mumbai in early January after she tested positive for Covid-19 with mild symptoms and was also diagnosed with pneumonia.

She remained in the ICU for more than two weeks, following signs of marginal improvement in her health, following which the doctors treating her had taken her off the ventilator January 28.

However, she was put on the ventilator again as her health started deteriorating from February 5 after which the team of doctors employed aggressive therapy to revive her. Her death plunged the country into mourning with President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the tributes in a series of tweets. "Lata-ji's demise is heart-breaking for me, as it is for millions the world over. In her vast range of songs, rendering the essence and beauty of India, generations found expression of their inner-most emotions. A Bharat Ratna, Lata-ji's accomplishments will remain incomparable," the President said.

Known as the Queen of Melody, Mangeshkar started training in singing at the age of five. She began her career as a singer in 1942 and has been credited to have sung 25,000 songs in as many as 36 Indian languages including Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Kannada, Bengali and others over a period of seven decades.

MORE P2

## Sputnik Light gets nod for emergency use

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) Sunday granted emergency use approval to single-dose Sputnik Light Covid-19 vaccine in India.

As per the vaccine developer RDIF, the interim data of the trial from Russia has shown an efficacy of 65.4 per cent against Covid-19, 21 days after immunisation.

"DCGI has granted emergency use permission to Single-dose Sputnik Light Covid-19 vaccine in India. This is the 9th Covid-19 vaccine in the country," said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in a tweet. This will further strengthen the nation's collective fight against the pandemic, he added.

Sputnik Light is based on recombinant human adenovirus serotype number 26 (the first component of Sputnik V). As per the RDIF, a one-shot vaccination regimen of Sputnik Light provides for ease of administration and helps to increase the efficacy and duration of other vaccines when used as a booster shot.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Don't know what happened. She was listening to news yesterday. Since then she lost her voice

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	27.7°C	27.8°C
TEMP MIN	12.3°C	12.2°C
Humidity	73%	71%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry	Weather most likely

## 4K telecom towers in state soon: Vaishnav

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** Union Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnav Sunday said the Centre would install about 4,000 mobile towers in various places across Odisha very soon.

Addressing a presser here, Vaishnav said nearly 6,000 villages in Odisha remain out of mobile connectivity due to lack of mobile towers. In December 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sanctioned a proposal for installation of mobile towers at 3,933 sites in the state, he said, adding in some places, one site will cover more than one village.

"There is a clear instruction from the Prime Minister that not a single village of Odisha should be left out from mobile connectivity. The PM has asked us to conduct a survey and come out with a Cabinet note, if any village is still left out. This is what we called Mission Purvodaya," the minister said. He said the BSNL, which went bankrupt during the UPA regime, is being revived by the Modi government.

"For the first time, the BSNL has come to operating profit level during last year," the Union minister said.

## ISI-funded mosques rising

■ The number of mosques has gone up from 760 in 2018 to 1,000 in 2021, while the number of madrasas has risen from 508 in 2018 to 645 in 2021 across the Indo-Nepal border

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** The rising number of mosques and madrasas along the Indo-Nepal border adjoining Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal during the last three years is a matter of serious security concern, intelligence agencies have warned in a latest report.

These religious setups have mushroomed within 10km from the Nepal border and also across the border in the Nepal side, leading to demographic change in some parts of the border areas in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, the report has said.

Quoting intelligence inputs, officials said that in the last three years, the number of mosques has gone up from 760 in 2018 to 1,000 in 2021, while the number of madrasas has risen from 508 in 2018 to 645 in 2021 in Nepali territories, officials said. Sources in the security grid said



INDO-NEPAL BORDER

■ Sources in the security grid say these religious setups are being funded by Pakistan's ISI and other anti-India organisations working abroad

that these religious setups are being funded by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and other anti-India organisations working abroad.

Officials in the security forces have admitted that the size and grandeur of these mosques and madrasas itself indicate foreign funding, and apart from the ISI, these religious houses also get

■ Officials in the security forces admit that the size and grandeur of these mosques and madrasas itself indicate foreign funding, and apart from the ISI, these religious houses also get funding from Arab countries.

Security officials deployed on India-Nepal border said these centres have been instigating anti-India sentiments and they also give shelter to criminals active in the border areas of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

"These areas have also seen a spurt in smuggling of fake Indian

currency notes and narcotics, and there is no extradition treaty agreement with Nepal," a government official said. Officials in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar governments have also admitted that criminals often take shelter in these religious places after committing crimes as the India-Nepal border is unfenced and porous.

The Integrated Check Posts have been set up on the major roads but the village roads leading to Nepal are unguarded, they added.

India shares 1,751-km long border with Nepal along Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar, WB and Sikkim while UP shares a 570-km border with Nepal and has 35 border police stations. Similarly, Bihar and West Bengal also share 726 km and 100 km border with Nepal, respectively.

"Majority of construction of mosques, madrasas and mosque-cum-madrasas have been flagged in UP's border districts of Maharajganj, Siddharth Nagar, Balrampur, Bahraich, Shravasti, Pilibhit and Khiri, while Kishanganj and Araria in Bihar and Panitanki town of Darjeeling district in West Bengal have seen such rise in last three years," an official in the central security grid said.

## Sidhu humbled, Channi Cong's CM face for Punjab elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ludhiana, Feb 6:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday declared Charanjit Singh Channi as his party's chief ministerial face for the high-stakes Punjab Assembly polls, a recognition that was also covered by state party chief Navjot Singh Sidhu. Gandhi made this announcement addressing a virtual rally here, after Sidhu in a speech hailed the party's decision to make Channi as the state CM after the unceremonious exit of the Amarinder Singh last year.

"People of Punjab said we need a chief minister who is from a 'gareeb ghar' (humble family), who understands poverty and hunger," Gandhi said. "It was a tough decision, you made it easy," said Gandhi declaring Channi as the party's CM face.

Gandhi warmly hugged Channi,



Sidhu and party leader Sunil Jakhar after he made the announcement.

Before the announcement, both Channi and Sidhu again assured that whoever is chosen by the party as the CM face, they will stand by the decision. The Congress had taken feedback from party leaders and workers in this regard. Gandhi said people of Punjab and party workers gave him a tough job. He said a political leader is not made in 10-15 days.

## Queen Elizabeth II wants Camilla to be Queen Consort

■ The Queen says she wants Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, to be known as Queen Consort when Prince Charles becomes King

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Feb 6:** Queen Elizabeth II has said that she wants Prince Charles' wife Camilla to be known as Queen Consort when he becomes King, in a significant intervention that shapes the future of the monarchy and firms up the place of the Duchess of Cornwall in the royal family.

The Queen, 95, used her Platinum Jubilee message Saturday marking the 70th anniversary of her reign, to back 74-year-old Camilla.

The Queen expressed her "sincere wish" that Camilla will be known as Queen Consort when Prince Charles becomes King.

Queen Consort refers to the spouse of a ruling king.

"I would like to express my thanks to you all for your support. I remain eternally grateful for, and humbled by, the loyalty and affection that you continue to give me," the Queen said in her message.

"And when, in the fullness of time, my son Charles becomes King, I know you will give him and his wife Camilla the same support that you have given me; and it is my sincere wish that, when that time comes, Camilla will be known as Queen Consort as she continues her own loyal service," she said.

Queen Elizabeth II Sunday became the first British monarch to celebrate a platinum jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth.

To celebrate the unprecedented anniversary of the monarch, events and initiatives will take place



throughout the year, culminating in a four-day UK bank holiday weekend from Thursday June 2 to Sunday June 5.

By expressing her desire to elevate Camilla, the Queen set out her hopes for her daughter-in-law, once a royal mistress, and now certain to be called Queen and crowned at the side of Charles, the Prince of Wales.

According to a BBC report, a

Clarence House spokesman said the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall were "touched and honoured" by the message.

There has been a different practice for male consorts of a monarch, such as Queen Elizabeth II's husband Prince Philip or Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, who became Prince Consort rather than King.

The usual precedent would have

been for Camilla to automatically become Queen when Charles was King, but because of uncertainty about public opinion it had been suggested that might not be the case, the BBC reported.

Charles was earlier married to hugely popular Princess Diana. They divorced in 1996, a year before she died in a car crash in Paris.

Charles married Camilla, who was also a divorcee, in 2005 in a civil marriage.

When Camilla married the Prince of Wales, it was made clear by Clarence House that she would carry the title of HRH The Princess Consort, The Guardian newspaper reported.

It has long been speculated that this was a title of convenience at a time when the duchess was seen to be less popular in the polls, due to her relationship with Charles when he was married to Diana, Princess of Wales.

# leisure



## RIHANNA, BEAU 'PLANNING TO MARRY AFTER BIRTH OF THEIR BABY'

Singer Rihanna is reportedly set to marry her rapper boyfriend A\$AP Rocky in Barbados after the birth of their baby. The singer and her rapper partner, both 33, announced they were expecting this week as she showed off her blossoming baby bump in a heartwarming New York photoshoot.

## ROLAND SLAMS SUPERHERO AND 'STAR WARS' FILMS

*Moonfall* director Roland Emmerich thinks superhero and 'Star Wars' films are ruining the industry. He is among the many actors and directors that have lambasted the state of the movie business because these types of movies exist, reports *deadline.com*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Positive thinking can change the world, and you could do with some today. No matter how tough the going gets, take it in your stride, says Ganesh. If you think you can do it, you will. You have the magic touch today to initiate a new business strategy.

**TAURUS**  
The time you previously spent on certain activities may not yield results as expected, predicts Ganesh. You will be reluctant to travel today. Your may find yourself wanting more space and freedom of expression. A stroll with your sweetheart, hand in hand, may be the highlight of your day, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, it's time to meet those who are close to you, and maybe even those who were close to you at some point of time. Also, it's time to revive old friendships, old memories and sink into nostalgia. You may want to buy a valuable historic artefact, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Your strange and unconventional behaviour doesn't always go down well with many people. If you think you are different, and maybe even better than others, it is advisable that you keep it under the wraps. The reason being that most people may not be able to understand you. Some may even feel intimidated by you.

**LEO**  
Some people have the world at their feet. And today, you are one of them, says Ganesh. With your gorgeous appearance and gregarious attitude, it is easy for you to open all doors with just a touch. So, you have the luxury to choose — either you entertain yourself through multiple avenues such as movies, theatre and music, or you be the entertainer with your superior performing skills.

**VIRGO**  
A shadow grows large in your mind today. An unknown fear will haunt your day, warns Ganesh. But be ready to take a hike. You are most likely to end up spending on your foreign associates. Be careful of those expenses, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Nothing comes for free — keep this in mind as you may have to pay your dues for the success you desire today, especially if it is a new project that you have undertaken. Be prepared to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in your endeavours. Spare money can be used to purchase new assets that may pay dividends in the future. Either that, or put it in a bank. In short, Ganesh advises prudence in money matters.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesh asks you to practice caution today. There are strong possibilities that an evil eye may attack you in some or other way. So, keep a watchful eye. And remember, every day brings along an experience and a lesson with it. Learn and move on.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Lady luck is all smiles for you today, predicts Ganesh. Suddenly, you feel like multi-tasking and becoming a jack of all. This is likely to keep you busy, almost throughout the day. If need be, your colleagues and peers will lend a helping hand.

**CAPRICORN**  
Patience is tested when one is in trouble; your patience could be tried today. The trick is in keeping your composure, says Ganesh. Avoid getting into an argument or scuffle with those around you, as luck may not be on your side.

**AQUARIUS**  
Things barely move today. But just like the proverbial tortoise, you seem to be winning the race, for many opportunities will come your way. There won't be any cash crunch, so you needn't lose sleep over that, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
The focus will be on children today, says Ganesh. While they will be the cause of an unfair share of your headache, you will be surprised at their ability to step up to the occasion, with just a little amount of coaching.

### Celebs on Lata's demise

On Sunday morning, India woke up to the news of Mangeshkar's demise leaving behind a legacy that will be hard to match. Several celebrities from film and music industries paid rich tributes to legendary singer.

**Amitabh Bachchan** described Lata Mangeshkar as 'the voice of million centuries' on his personal blog. He wrote: "She has left us... The voice of a million centuries has left us... her voice resounds now in the Heavens! Prayers for calm and peace."

**Kangana Ranaut** conveyed the heartfelt sentiment of the Hindi film world when she wrote on her Instagram story: "What a loss!! India's most beautiful voice is gone!! There will never be another Lataji."

**Anil Kapoor** said "Lataji holds a place in our hearts that will never be taken by anyone else. That's how profoundly she has impacted our lives with her music. May she rest in peace and light up the heavens with her brightness."

**Jackie Shroff** shared a post on Instagram, where he is seen holding a picture of the nonagenarian, and captioned it with a heart-break emoji.

**Shahid Kapoor** tweeted "An icon, a legend... words will always fall short. Thank you for your glorious voice, Lataji. It will resonate worldwide for generations to come. RIP."

**Pooja Bhatt** wrote: "#LataMangeshkar To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

**Madhur Bhandarkar** said on a personal note: "She has been a mother figure to me over the years, used to call her every fortnight and have conversations. It's a personal loss for me. Her presence will be immensely missed in my life. Love you Didi. #OmShanti #VoiceofIndia"

**Shreya Ghoshal**, on Twitter, said, "Feeling numb. Devastated. Yesterday was Saraswati Puja & today Ma took her blessed one with her. Somehow it feels that even the birds, trees & wind are silent today. Swar Kokila Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar ji, your divine voice will echo till eternity. Rest in peace. Om Shanti."

**Esha Deol**, whose father has acted in films featuring the songs of Lata Mangeshkar, said she was shocked and heart-broken by the news. "Her melodious voice will live in our hearts forever."



# Ode to the Nightingale

Legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, who died at the age of 92 Sunday in a Mumbai hospital, was fondly known as the 'Nightingale of India'. The recipient of the Bharat Ratna, Dada Saheb Phalke and Padma awards, the Melody Queen ruled over Indian cinema with her melodious voice for decades. She was the first Indian artiste to perform at the famous Royal Albert Hall at London with the Wren Orchestra way back in 1974. She made our hearts go up an octave or more with love and longing, moved us to tears of joy and sorrow, sometimes introspect and other times dance in abandon, her voice mirroring our every emotion, her songs covering the cadence of time and history from the gramophone to the digital age. Lata is no more but the music plays on in a seemingly endless refrain, as it has for almost eight decades and likely for many more. **Orissa POST** presents a timeline of Lata's accomplished journey...

India's legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar's matchless versatility has made her a national cultural icon that has stood the test of time. Let us take a look at the Melody Queen's journey.

**September 28, 1929:** India was blessed with the Queen of Melody who would enthral the nation with her honey-life voice. The iconic singer was born as Hema Mangeshkar in Indore to Marathi-Konkani musician Deenanath Mangeshkar and his wife Shevanti. She was the eldest among her four siblings — Meena Khadikar, Asha Bhosle, Usha Mangeshkar and Hridaynath Mangeshkar — who are all renowned singers and musicians.

**1935:** From a young age, the playback singer's father — who adopted the family name Mangeshkar as he was from Goa's native town Mangeshi — started her music training. She began as an actress in Mangeshkar's Marathi musical plays when she was just five years old.

**1941:** Much before India won its Independence from the British Raj, Mangeshkar started her musical journey at the age of 12. She sang two songs in the studio for the first time for the radio December 16.

**1942:** After her father died of a heart condition, movie company Navyug Chitrapat owner Vinayak Damodar Karnataki, who was a close friend of the Mangeshkars,

helped bring the then young girl's singing and acting career on track. She got her first break when she acted in Navyug Chitrapat's Marathi movie *Pahili Mangalaa-gaur*, and sang *Natali Chaitraachi Navalaai* in the movie.

**1943:** Her first song *Mata Ek Sapoot Ki Duniya Badal De Tu* for 1943 Marathi film *Gajabhaau* was recorded.

**1945:** Mangeshkar moved to Mumbai after Karnataka shifted the headquarters of Navyug Chitrapat, and began her training in Hindustani classical music from Ustad Aman Ali Khan of Bhindibazaar Gharana.

**1946:** She sang *Paa Lagoon Kar Jori* for Vasant Joglekar's Hindi-language movie *Aap Ki Seva Mein* (1946).

**1948:** Mangeshkar was mentored by music director Ghulam Haider right after Karnataka's death. After getting rejected by producer Sashadhar Mukherjee's *Shahed*, Mangeshkar got mainstream with *Majboor* with the song *Dil Mera Toda, Mujhe Kahin Ka Na Chhora*.

**1949:** *Aayega Aanevaala*, featuring classic actress Madhubala, was her major hits from the movie *Mahal*.

**1950s:** Mangeshkar saw great scope in movies, and produced four films - Marathi film *Vaadal* (1953), and Hindi movies *Jhaanjhar* (1953) and *Kanchan Ganga* (1955).

**1963:** *Aye Mere Watan Ke Logo* in

Mangeshkar's soulful voice brought tears to the eyes of every citizen and the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, during the Sino-Indian War.

**1963:** This was the year when Mangeshkar's association with music directors Laxmikant-Pyarelal began. The singer gave voice to many of their com-



File photo of Lata Mangeshkar receiving Bharat Ratna award

positions and the collaboration kept growing stronger. Some popular names include *Mr. X in Bombay*, *Mere Hamdam Mere Dost*, *Intaquam*, *Do Raaste*, among others.

**1960s:** This was the era when Mangeshkar tried her hand in composing music. Under Anand Ghan's pseudonym, she composed music

for Marathi movies *Ram Ram Pavhana* (1960), *Maratha Tituka Melvaava* (1963), *Mohityanchi Manjula* (1963), *Sadhi Manase* (1965) and *Tambadi Mati* (1969). The Maharashtra government honoured her with the Best Music Director Award for *Sadhi Manase*, and song *Airanichya Deva Tula* received the Best Song Award.

**1969:** Mangeshkar was honoured with the third-highest civilian award — Padma Bhushan — for years of commitment to entertaining the people of the country.

**1974:** Mangeshkar went international. She was the first Indian to perform at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Also, she made it to the Guinness Book of Records (GBR) for being the most-recorded artiste in history, between 1948 and 1974. The entry claimed she recorded not less than 25,000 solo, duet and chorus backed songs in 20 Indian languages. Singer Mohammad Rafi contested it saying he sang around 28,000 songs. The duo didn't share a strong bond after trouble with royalty payments.

**1970s:** Mangeshkar became the common voice for Laxmikant-Pyarelal and Rahul Dev Burman compositions. She collaborated with popular ever-green singer Kishore Kumar, Manna Dey, Mukesh, Mohammed Rafi, sisters Asha and Usha, Hemant

Kumar, among others.

**1989:** Mangeshkar was honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award — India's highest award in cinema — which is given at the National Films Awards ceremony.

**1984 & 1992:** The Government of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra instituted the Lata Mangeshkar Award to honour her legacy.

**1997:** The state government gave its highest civilian award — Maharashtra Bhushan Award — to Mangeshkar.

**1999:** She won her Padma Vibhushan — the second-highest civilian award for her exceptional and distinguished service to the nation.

**2001:** She received the Bharat Ratna award — highest civilian honour — for her contribution to cinema and music.

**2009:** Mangeshkar was honoured with France's highest order, the title of Officer of the French Legion of Honour.

**2012:** Music label ILM Music came to life, with an album of bhajans that she sang with her sister Usha.

**2015:** Mangeshkar's last song for a film was *Jeena Hai Kya for Dunno Y2... Life Is A Moment*, a sequel to the Kapil Sharma-starrer *Dunno Y... Na Jaane Kyun*. She recorded the song at her own studio.

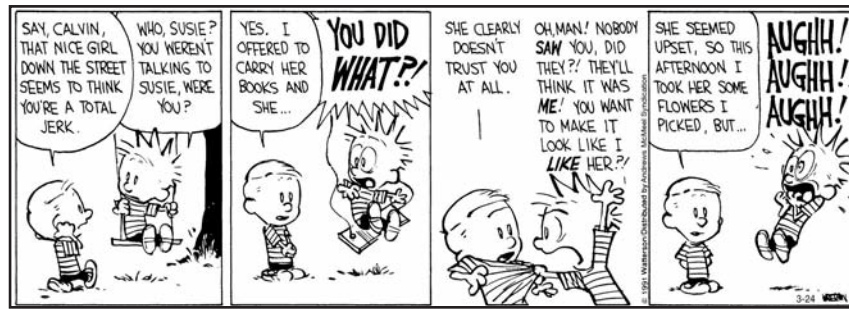
**2022:** India lost her Nightingale. The government declared national mourning for two days with the Tricolour flying at half-mast.

### FUN post

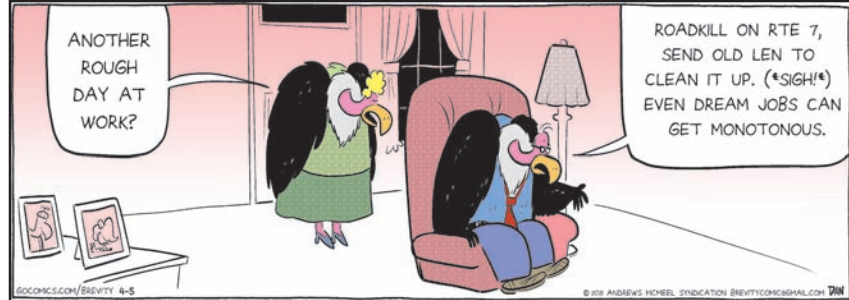
### PEANUTS



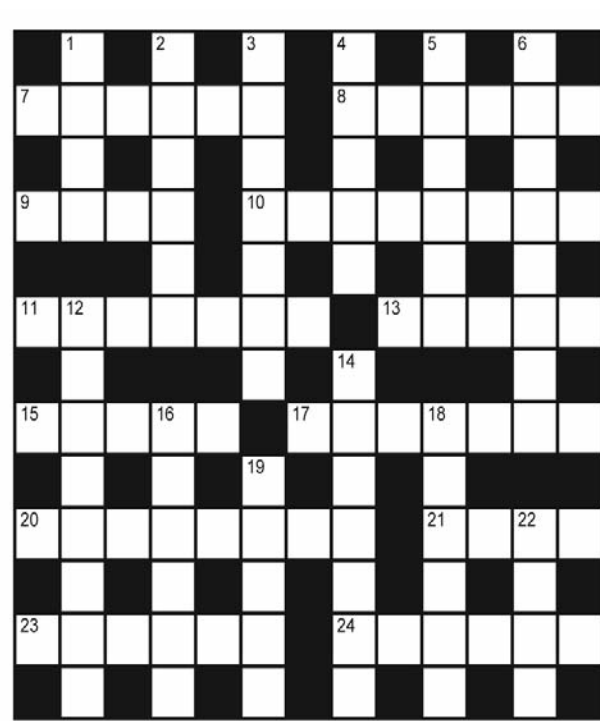
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



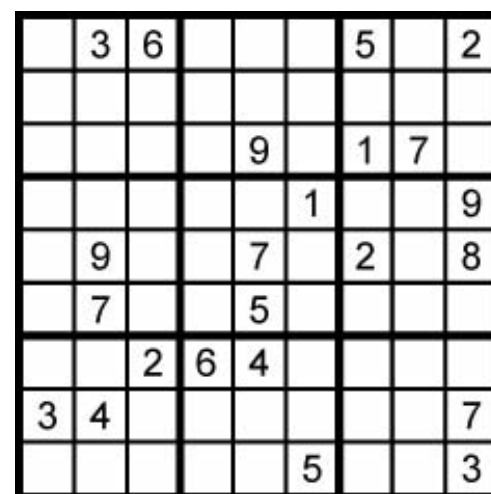
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Funny stuff
  - 8 Borealis
  - 9 Minor setback
  - 10 Window-shopping
  - 11 Basque, e.g.
  - 13 Bracelet site
  - 15 Cousin of a loon
  - 17 Detonate
  - 20 Enjoyed immensely (3,1,4)
  - 21 Fair feature
  - 23 Season
  - 24 Worthy principles
- Down**
- 1 Destroy
  - 2 Mountain lion
  - 3 High-spirited horse
  - 4 Chocolate substitute
  - 5 Newgate was one
  - 6 In need of a pressing
  - 12 Savage
  - 14 Tell it like it is
  - 16 Crows
  - 18 Pantry
  - 19 Cavalry sword
  - 22 Pickle type

### 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

#### CROSSWORD

C A S E H O N E Y D E W  
A B Q B L Y L R E  
B A U B L E S U S A G E  
L A A O T D S P  
E L B O W E V E N T S  
C U R F A U C E T  
R H C P T N S O  
W A P I T I N L A W  
C P N P D Y A  
H A T E S P R E V I E W  
I E E S N A  
C U R A T O R S U G L Y

#### SUDOKU

1 9 5 2 4 7 6 8 3  
8 7 4 3 6 9 5 1 2  
6 3 2 5 8 1 4 9 7  
4 8 9 1 7 6 3 2 5  
5 6 3 9 2 8 7 4 1  
2 1 7 4 3 5 9 6 8  
7 4 1 8 9 3 2 5 6  
3 2 8 6 5 4 1 7 9  
9 5 6 7 1 2 8 3 4

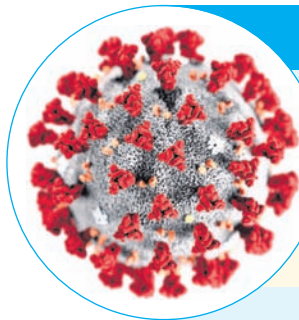
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## NOBLE DEED

Puri district Bharat Scouts and Guides organises a blood donation camp at Balagandi High School in the Holy City, Sunday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	39,49,23,086	31,35,61,069	57,54,758
India	4,21,88,138	4,04,61,148	5,01,979
Odisha	12,66,811	12,37,976	8,734

# CS asks Horticulture dept to promote jackfruit cultivation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra has directed the officials of Horticulture department to promote and popularise jackfruit cultivation in the state.

Mahapatra gave this direction while presiding over a high level meeting on production of nutritious fruits held in virtual mode from Lokseba Bhawan recently.

“Jackfruit has high nutritional value and the agro-climatic conditions of Odisha are suitable for its cultivation”, said the Chief Secretary.

He directed the officials of Horticulture department to popularise the cultivation of jackfruit with necessary supports like good quality saplings, post-harvest processing, value addition and marketing. Jackfruit could be branded and popularised as a superfood among the people, said the Chief Secretary.

Mahapatra also directed the officials to identify suitable places, where jackfruit could be cultivated in large patches. The officials were also asked to explore all possibilities for promoting jackfruit farming in places, where people have the traditional skill for such cultivation.

Participating in the meeting, Development Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena asked the officials to work out a detail plan with inputs from the thematic experts.

The Chief Secretary directed the officials to popularise the cultivation of jackfruit with necessary supports like good quality saplings, post-harvest processing, value addition and marketing

Jackfruit could be branded and popularised as a superfood among the people, said the Chief Secretary

Additional Chief Secretary Sanjeeb Chopra said Odisha is the second largest producer of jackfruit in the country



The experts had suggested the government to glamorise the food items processed from jackfruit through jackfruit festivals at different levels, sources said.

Additional Chief Secretary Sanjeeb Chopra apprised the meeting that Odisha is the second largest producer of jackfruit after Tripura. Jackfruit trees are found in almost all districts of Odisha. However, around 15 districts contribute to the major portion of the jackfruit production in the state, he said.

“Jackfruit trees are mostly confined to forest areas, backyards, wastelands and roadside places with around 3.15 MT of production per annum. Out of the total produce, around 55 per cent are consumed as vegetable and around 35

per cent are consumed as a ripe fruit during festivities. As per local climatic conditions, around 50 blocks in the state are more suitable for large scale jackfruit production on commercial scale,” Chopra added.

The Chief Secretary also directed the officials of the Horticulture department to create extensive awareness on the nutritional composition of jackfruit so that its commercial cultivation would be taken up by the farmers.

He put emphasis on promoting local entrepreneurship for setting up of facilities for post-harvest processing and value addition. The officials were asked to raise the area under jackfruit cultivation in the state.

# Edu institutions reopen today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** All educational institutions, imparting any type of education to the level of Class-VIII and above including schools, colleges, ITIs, polytechnics, degree and professional colleges and universities will begin physical classroom teaching Monday.

With the declining trend in Covid-19 cases, the state government had decided to reopen all educational institutions in a phased manner from February 7. “Physical classes for students of Class VIII and above will resume from February 7 while schools will reopen for KG to Class VII students, February 14,” Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra had said here, Thursday.

Similarly, the Higher Education department announced to start classroom teaching and other academic activities in physical mode in universities and colleges under its administrative control from February 7. Hostels were announced to be opened from February 6.

Due to three Covid-19 waves, schools for students up to Class V have remain closed for more than two years while higher educational institutions have been closed since January 10.

The School and Mass Education department had also announced the timings for physical classes of schools that will reopen Monday. Teaching hours are fixed from 10 am to 4 pm for students from Class-IX to XII in all educational institutions under S&ME department. For students from Class I to VIII the teaching hours are from 9 am to 1 pm.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## House burgled in City

**BHUBANESWAR:** Miscreants decamped with gold jewellery and Rs 1 lakh in cash from a house in Chakeisani area under Mancheswar police limits here, an official said Sunday. Sources said Prafulla Kumar Palaru, along with his family, had gone to Baghamari in Khurda to attend some function Friday afternoon. “The family returned home Sunday afternoon and found the locks of the main gate as well as the door of their house were twisted. Later, they found a gold chain, five gold rings and Rs 1 lakh were missing from a cupboard in their bedroom,” an official said quoting Palaru’s police complaint.

## MeT predicts dense fog for 2 more days

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** Several parts of Odisha were under the grip of a cold wave, with nine places recording minimum temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius, the MeT department said Sunday.

Similiguda in Koraput district was the coldest place in the state with 6.5 degrees Celsius, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said. The mercury fell below normal at many places, plunging by 5.7 degrees Celsius in Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district, 4.9 notches in Jharsuguda, and by 4.7 in Angul, a bulletin said.

Bhubaneswar recorded a minimum of 12.3 degrees Celsius, 5.4 points below the normal, and it was down by 4.5 to settle at 12.2 degrees Celsius in Cuttack, it said.

The MeT department forecast cold wave conditions in parts of Jharsuguda,

Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Angul, Subarnapur, Bolangir and Kalahandi districts till Monday. There will be no large change in the minimum temperatures during the next two days, and the mercury will rise gradually by 3-5 degrees Celsius subsequently, it added.

In its forecast for Monday (valid from 8:30am February 7 to 8:30am February 8), the weatherman said dense fog is very likely to occur at one or two places over Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Angul and Dhenkanal.

“Dense fog is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati and Kandhamal between 8:30am February 8 and 8:30am February 9,” the MeT department said.

## Man dupes job seeker in Cuttack, arrested

**CUTTACK:** Jagatpur police here Sunday claimed to have arrested a man on charges of duping a youth of Rs 3 lakh on the promise of a job in a private bank. The accused was identified as Sawan Rout of Mahajanpur village under Jagatpur police limits. Police sources said Rout had taken Rs 3 lakh from the victim, Satyajit Swain, to help him get a job at the Jagatpur branch of a leading private bank. However, he did not keep his words. Swain approached the police that registered a case (15/22) under several Sections of the IPC, including 420, 467 and 468, and took Rout into custody. A motorcycle and a smartphone were recovered from his possession, it was learnt.

## Youth hangs self

**BHUBANESWAR:** The body of a 19-year-old youth was found hanging from the ceiling fan of his room at Gadakana Majhi Sahi under Mancheswar police limits here, Sunday. The deceased was identified as Rakesh Patra of Nuagaon in Jagatsinghpur. Sources claimed that the deceased was alone in his house Saturday night as his family members had gone to their village in Jagatsinghpur for some work. Upon their return, his father Ranjan found him hanging in the room. He rushed Rakesh to the Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar where the doctors declared him brought dead. Police have been suspecting failure in love to be the reason behind the suicide. The investigation has begun after registration of an unnatural death case (14/22).



Arrangements are in place for the Magha Saptami festival at Chandrabhaga in Puri district. The festival would be organised with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocol, Monday. The administration has deployed 14 platoons of police force and put up barricades around the holy pond to check congregation

# Siddhamahaveer ROB project in limbo

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Feb 6:** Delay in land acquisition has pushed the fate of a rail overbridge (ROB) project at Siddhamahaveer level crossing on Puri-Konark National Highway here into uncertainty, sources said.

The locals have refused to part their land for the project alleging inadequate compensation package, sources added.

The residents of Puri have been demanding construction of a ROB at Siddhamahaveer level crossing

for last two decades. According to them, the railway authorities usually shut the level crossing gates once in every fifteen minutes to facilitate rail traffic. As a result, commuters and locals are forced to wait for a long time at the level crossing.

The residents had raised the ROB issue with several ministers, people’s representatives and government officials in the past.

Considering the plea, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) had initiated process to construct a

ROB at Siddhamahaveer. Officials of the NHAI, a private consultancy firm and Competent Authority of Land Acquisition had initiated land measurement for the ROB project. NHAI sources had claimed that at least 2.66 acres of land would be acquired for the project.

“The authorities have served a notice on me and made it clear that they would demolish four rooms of our house as part of the land acquisition process. However, they are offering us only Rs 10.81 lakh as compensation. I have raised my objection

before land acquisition officer,” said Gourimani Jena, a local.

Land acquisition officer PK Jena said they would acquire land from altogether 240 people for the ROB project. “We had served notice in this regard on 160 people. They have raised certain issues. The administration is taking steps to address these issues and expedite the land acquisition process,” he added.

Puri Collector Samartha Verma said the administration would finish the land acquisition process at the earliest.

# Indian scientists design ‘vax against all variants of Cov’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** Indian scientists claim to have designed a universal vaccine that can be effective against all variants of the coronavirus, which triggered the once-in-a-century pandemic two years back.

With new variants of the SARS-COV-2 virus triggering fresh waves of the highly infectious disease, scientists at the Kazi Nazrul University (KNU), Asansol and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Berhampur have designed a peptide vaccine which they claim could protect against any future variants of the coronavirus.

Their research has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Molecular Liquids that is devoted to fundamental aspects of structure, interactions and dynamic processes in simple, molecular and complex liquids.

“In this study, we employed immunoinformatic approaches to



design AbhiSCoV - a multi-epitope multi-target chimeric peptide that would be able to generate protective immunity against all six virulent members of the family hCoV-229E, hCoV-HKU1, hCoV-OC43, SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV as well as SARS-CoV-2,” the researchers said.

“The designed vaccine was found to be highly stable, antigenic and immunogenic,” the researchers Abhigyan Choudhury and Suprabhat Mukherjee from KNU and Parth Sarthi Sen Gupta, Saroj Kumar Panda, and Malay Kumar Rana from IISER said.

Choudhary said the team of researchers developed the vaccine

using computational methods and the next stage would involve the production of the vaccine which would be followed by testing.

“This vaccine is one of a kind. No other vaccine in the world has been designed to cope with all the Coronaviridae family viruses at a

single time,” he told PTI.

He said the researchers had first identified various conserved regions in the spike protein of the six different viruses that undergo very few mutations and thus change a little in the course of pandemic.

Also, these regions of the protein identified are highly immunogenic which means they can produce high levels of immune memory in the body that is required to protect against the viruses, he said.

“Unlike other vaccines, these identified were selected after they have shown high binding strengths with a protein called TLR4 – the same protein responsible for detecting SARS-COV-2 viruses in the body and initiating the immune responses,” Choudhary said.

“We also simulated injection of the vaccine into virtual patients and have found that this vaccine is highly capable of protecting the recipient from the viruses,” he said.

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Jagatpur, Cuttack	4500 Sqft		

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# Tribals are best protectors of environment: Experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** Protection of the environment has emerged as one of the major challenges for the mankind. Governments across the globe have been formulating comprehensive action plans and negotiating international treaties to protect the environment. But, these efforts have not succeeded in reversing the decline in the environmental quality.

This was opined by experts at a webinar on 'Environment and Tribes' organised by the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) Sunday.

Challenges like global warming, climate change, pollution and extinction of species are steadily rising to the critical stages. The tribal people have been protecting the nature and conserving the biodiversity of the forest ecosystems since the beginning of civilisation, said the experts.

"We should learn lessons from the lifestyles of the indigenous people to bring lasting solutions to the environmental issues," they opined.



OES president Sundara Narayan Patro said the tribal people consume fruits, seeds, tubers and roots, and adhere to organic farming and horticulture. Their houses are built from various natural products collected from forests. Medicinal plants identified by them are used for curing illness.

"Though their lives and lifestyles are intricately linked to the natural ecosystems, they stick to the principle of sustainability, remain away from consumerist lifestyle, put no stress on the functioning of the ecosystem and create no carbon footprint or pollution," Patro observed.

Participating in the webinar, former chief of Anthropology department at Utkal University, Jagannath Dash, narrated his long interactions with the tribal communities by citing a case study on Similipal Biosphere Reserve.

stick to the principle of sustainability, remain away from consumerist lifestyle, put no stress on the functioning of the ecosystem and create no carbon footprint or pollution," Patro observed.

Participating in the webinar, former chief of Anthropology department at Utkal University, Jagannath Dash, narrated his long interactions with the tribal communities by citing a case study on Similipal Biosphere Reserve.

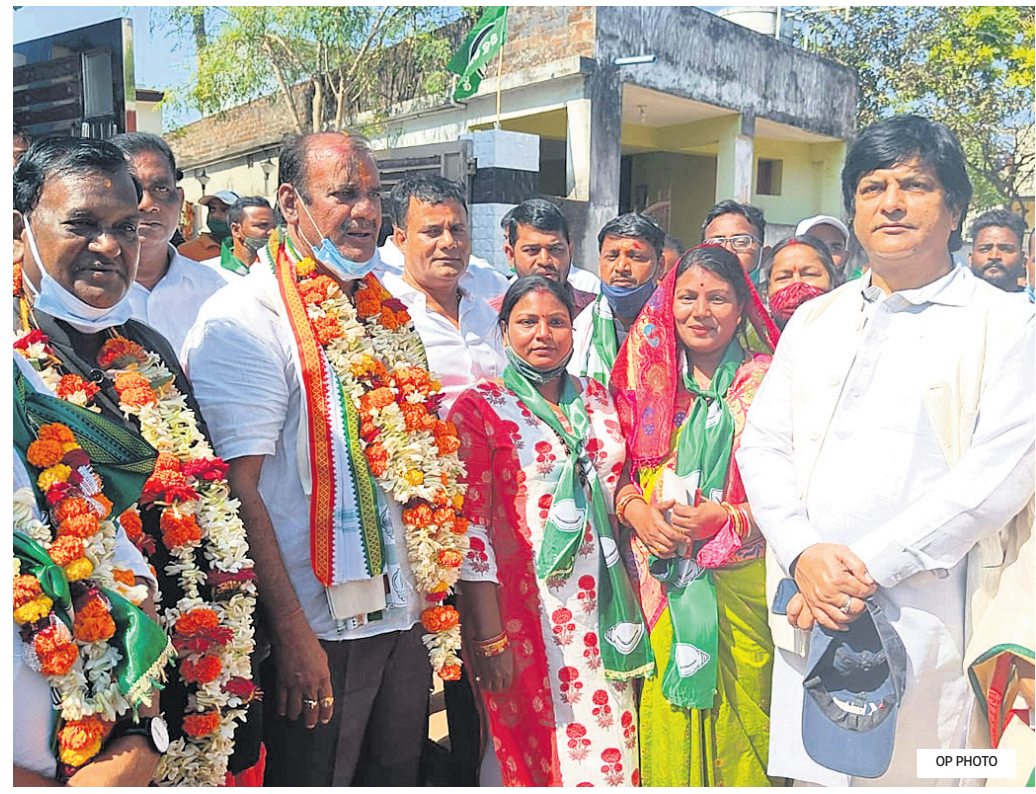
**Though their lives and lifestyles are intricately linked to the natural ecosystems, they stick to the principle of sustainability, remain away from consumerist lifestyle, put no stress on the functioning of the ecosystem and create no carbon footprint or pollution**

SUNDARA NARAYAN PATRO | PRESIDENT, ORISSA ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY

"Tribes such as Khadias, Ujias and Birhors consider Similipal as their primordial home, take utmost care of the resources within their territories and function as the real conservationists. Their religious beliefs are intertwined with protection of various plants and animals," he said.

OES secretary Jaya Krushna Panigrahi opined that modernity and consumerism have affected our environment detrimentally. "We need to emulate the tribes to protect the environment," he said.

## PANCHAYAT POLLS



Minister Ashok Panda and MP Munna Khan seek votes for BJD Zilla Parishad nominee at Samantarapur near Bhubaneswar, Sunday

# 23 Covid deaths, 2,106 cases in state

PNN/ AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** Odisha recorded 23 more Covid-19 deaths Sunday, while the infections were the lowest in a month as 2,106 people tested positive, the Health Department said in a bulletin.

The state's daily test positivity rate dropped to 3.48 per cent as 60,483 samples were tested in the last 24 hours, a bulletin stated. Of the 23 Covid-19 deaths, Khurda district reported nine. The state had logged 2,603 Covid-19 cases and 21 deaths Friday.

Out of total 2,106 new infections, 1,229 were reported from quarantine centres while 877 persons contracted the virus locally. The state had registered 2,603 cases of coronavirus infections Saturday.

Khurda district, of which the state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest number of cases with 429 infections, while 324 children were among those newly infected in the state.

The toll mounted to 8,734 with 23 more casualties and these are confirmed as deaths to the disease after an audit. Fifty-three other



Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far, according to data. Khurda reported the highest deaths at nine, followed by Puri (three), Koraput and Nayagarh districts (two each) and Bhadrak, Bolangir, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur,

Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far, according to data. Khurda reported the highest deaths at nine, followed by Puri (three), Koraput and Nayagarh districts (two each) and Bhadrak, Bolangir, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur,

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Odisha currently has 23,672 active Covid-19 cases, including 5,245 in Khurda, which is in the red zone

Sundargarh and Cuttack are among the four districts that are in the yellow zone with over 1,000 cases

The State Pool reported 78 new cases as these are persons who have come from outside Odisha and have tested positive

Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Keonjhar districts (one each). Odisha currently has 23,672 active Covid-19 cases, including 5,245 in Khurda, which is in the red zone.

Sundargarh and Cuttack are among the four districts that are in the yellow zone with over 1,000 cases. As many as 5,376 patients have recuperated from the disease in

the last 24 hours in the coastal state. The Covid-19 tally rose to 12,66,811, including 12,34,352 recoveries, it said.

Other districts that reported fresh Covid-19 cases are: Angul (97), Balasore (40), Bargarh (17), Bhadrak (40), Bolangir (65), Boudh (55), Cuttack (145), Deogarh (9), Dhenkanal (61), Gajapati (64), Ganjam (35), Jagatsinghpur (32), Jajpur (53), Jharsuguda (56), Kalahandi (36), Kandhamal (44), Kendrapara (76), Keonjhar (40), Koraput (45), Malkangiri (7), Mayurbhanj (42), Nabarangpur (43), Nayagarh (70), Nuapada (38), Puri (34), Rayagada (43), Sambalpur (56) and Subarnapur (37).

The State Pool reported 78 new cases. These are persons who have come from outside Odisha and have tested positive. A total of 2,79,96,514 swab samples have been cumulatively tested so far.

# Pandemic widens screening gap among cancer patients

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** The ongoing Covid pandemic has disrupted healthcare systems globally leading to widening the gap between treatment and patient care of non-Covid disease including cancer. Cancer is a major contributor to the disease burden worldwide. Several studies have projected that the global cancer burden will continue to grow for at least next two decades.

The Covid pandemic has undoubtedly delayed the cancer screenings, diagnosis, and treatment around the world. The cancer cases in India increased at an average annual rate of 1.1-2 per cent from 2010-2019, and deaths in the country also went up at an average rate of 0.1-1 per cent in the same period, according to the analysis by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington School of Medicine.

The new cancer patients registration, follow up for old patients and surgery had recorded considerable decline in India between March and May 2020, compared to the same period in 2019 as per a Lancet study of May 2021. The ambidirectional cohort study was conducted at 41 cancer centres across India that were members of the National Cancer Grid of India to compare provision of oncology services between March 1 and May 31, 2020, with the same time period in 2019.

A total of 54 per cent reduction was recorded in the new patients registration between this period. The number of new patients registered decreased from 1,12,270 to 51,760 between March 1 and May 31, 2020, as per the study. On the same line, a total of 46 per cent reduction, from 6,34,745 to 3,40,984 patients, was registered in the number of patients who had follow-up visits to the hospital.

Anshuman Kumar, a Delhi based cancer specialist, told IANS that in the absence of decentralised cancer care centres in India, the patients have largely been ignored in the first and second Covid wave. "Patients coming from rural areas

of different states were stopped to visit for follow-up and even for first time treatment as all transport communication channels were closed. All of sudden, premier health institutions like AIIMS and others started refusing patient admissions other than Covid which impacted the cancer care in India adversely.

Highlighting the Lancet study he said that 54 per cent reduction in the new patients registration among 41 cancer care centers nationwide was due to the illogical decision of shutting doors of premier health institution for non Covid patients.

According to a study from AIIMS Oncology department, total 51 per cent reduction was recorded in new case registration in OPD and around one third reduction was noticed in the cancer surgeries. The Lancet study points out that the hospital admissions decreased from 88,801 to 56,885 (36 per cent reduction) and outpatient chemotherapy decreased from 1,73,634 to 1,09,107 (37 per cent reduction) in 41 cancer centres. These reductions were even more marked between April and May 2020. Cancer screening was stopped completely or was functioning at less than 25 per cent of usual capacity at more than 70 per cent of centres during these months, the study said.

The ongoing Covid pandemic has also impacted adversely the research and development in the cancer. "The pandemic has impeded the R&D of cancer treatment in 3 ways. Firstly, patient enrolment in oncology clinical trials of chemotherapeutic drugs has gone down. Second, the trials of modes of administering these therapies also got impacted adversely. Oncotherapy medicines have to be protected from Bacterial Contamination and the health care worker has to be protected from chemical contamination. Trials of advanced closed system transfer devices got stalled. Thirdly, R&D in Oncology also suffered as there was a conscious effort by many researchers to focus on Covid," said Pavan Choudhary Chairman Medical Technology Association of India.

# Virtual tour of Bhumij tribe

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** The ST and SC Development Department in the virtual tour of Odisha State Tribal Museum, Sunday, showcased the Bhumij tribe of Odisha to the visitors.

SCSTRTI Director AB Ota said, "Residing in Assam, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand, the Bhumij are an agricultural community. In Odisha they live primarily in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore and Sundargarh. Tracing their origin to Tamulia in Jharkhand, the Bhumij live alongside other tribal groups in multi-ethnic villages. The attire of Bhumij is influenced by their Hindu neighbours. Men wear a dhoti with a gamchha on one shoulder. A shirt may be used to cover the upper body when leaving the village."

The women wear a saree and a blouse called a jacket. Traditionally these have been made of coarse cotton, white with red or blue lines. In appearance, the cloth was similar to that of their neighbours, the Oraon, but with a less prominent use of red in the form of thinner borders. Nose rings, bead necklaces, armllets and bangles are purchased by the women from local markets.

Many of these are made from precious metals, particularly silver. The Bhumij are not easily distinguished from other tribal communities in terms of attire. A distinct socio-religious belief system however governs this community, internally divided into totemic clans like Horse, Lotus, Snake and Earth. For the Bhumij these totems representing flora, fauna and celestial bodies connect them to the natural world inhabited by ghosts, spirits and invisible Gods. Singbonga is the supreme deity and each clan observes several taboos related to their totem and maintains marital contact across State boundaries.



Several Congress activists from Kendrapara join Biju Janata Dal in the presence of BJD organisational general secretary Pranab Prakash Das and former MLA Debashish Samantaray in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

## NEW ENTRANTS

# Want to escape mosquito bites? Wear right colour

**B**eating the bite of mosquitoes this spring and summer could hinge on your attire and skin, suggests a new study.

The research, led by scientists at the University of Washington, indicates that an Aedes aegypti - after detecting Carbon Dioxide that we exhale - flies toward specific colours, including red, orange, black and cyan. At the same time, the mosquitoes ignore other colours, such as green, purple, blue and white.

The researchers believe these findings help explain how mosquitoes find hosts, since human skin, regardless of overall pigmentation, emits a strong red-orange "signal" to their eyes.

"Mosquitoes appear to use odours to help them distinguish what is nearby, like a host to bite," said senior author Jeffrey Riffell, Professor of biology at the varsity.

"When they smell specific compounds, like CO2 from our breath, that scent stimulates the eyes to scan for specific colours and other visual patterns, which are associated with a potential host, and head to them," he added.

The results, published in the journal Nature Communications, reveal how the mosquito sense of smell - known as olfaction - influences how the mosquito responds to visual cues.

Knowing which colours attract hungry mosquitoes and which ones do not can help design better



repellents, traps and other methods to keep mosquitoes at bay. Earlier three major cues that attract mosquitoes were breath, sweat and the temperature of skin.

"In this study, we found a fourth cue; the colour red, which can not only be found on your clothes, but is also found in everyone's skin. The shade of your skin doesn't matter,

we are all giving off a strong red signature," Riffell said, adding "Filtering out those attractive colours in our skin, or wearing clothes that avoid those colours, could be another way to prevent a mosquito biting."

In their experiments, the researchers tracked individual mosquitoes in miniature test chambers,

**Mosquitoes appear to use odours to help them distinguish what is nearby, like a host to bite. When they smell specific compounds, like CO2 from our breath, that scent stimulates the eyes to scan for specific colours and other visual patterns, which are associated with a potential host, and head to them**

JEFFREY RIFFELL | SENIOR AUTHOR & PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

into which they sprayed specific odours and presented different types of visual patterns - such as a coloured

dot or a tasty human hand.

Without any odour stimulus, mosquitoes largely ignored a dot at the bottom of the chamber, regardless of colour. After a spritz of CO2 into the chamber, mosquitoes continued to ignore the dot if it was green, blue or purple in colour. But if the dot was red, orange, black or cyan, mosquitoes would fly towards it.

When Riffell's team repeated the chamber experiments with human skin tone pigmentation cards - or a researcher's bare hand - mosquitoes again flew toward the visual stimulus only after CO2 was sprayed into the chamber. "These experiments lay out the first steps mosquitoes use to find hosts," said Riffell.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Giant Tricolour at half mast

**Jeypore:** The giant Tricolour at the Traffic Square in this town was flown at half mast as a tribute to the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar following her death Sunday morning. The flag which was flying at a height of 110 feet was flown at half mast after the Centre announced that the legendary singer will be accorded a 'state funeral' and the National Flag will fly at half mast for two days as a mark of respect to the departed singer.

Plaint filed against Keonjhar MLA

**Keonjhar:** A day after a complaint was filed by a party worker and trader against BJP's Keonjhar MLA and the chief whip of the opposition Mohan Charan Majhi, the latter alleged that this is tantamount to defamation of his image and will move the court against it. The complainant is identified as Sanjib Nayak, a trader and a BJP worker. He has, meanwhile, resigned from the BJP. While campaigning for the three-tier panchayat elections is in full swing in Keonjhar, filing of a complaint against the MLA has set the political circle abuzz.

Brown sugar seized

**Balasure:** Police Saturday seized 325 gram of brown sugar valued at ₹30 lakh from a man in Balasure district, an officer said. He was arrested from a place near Rajhat bridge on National Highway 60. The person hailed from Debhog village under Singla police station, the officer said.

12 poachers held

**Kaniha:** Forest officials of this range arrested 12 people on charge of hunting a barking deer late Saturday night. Poaching activities have become rampant in forests under Kaniha range in Angul district. According to range officer Nilamani Dehuri, a group of people had hunted a barking deer with the help of dogs in Birupal reserve forest Saturday night. They had cooked the venison and were about to feed on. Acting on a tip-off, forest officials patrolling in the area had raided in Jharkilinda village and seized the venison. A dozen people involved in the poaching were arrested. A case was registered against them.

PERILOUS PASSAGE



Rickety motor launches continue to be the primary mode of transport in many pockets of Swabhiman Anchal, an erstwhile Maoist bastion in Malkangiri district as a wave of enthusiasm grips the people with the panchayat polls being held after over 10 years

AP officials stray into Kotia again

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pottangi, Feb 6:** Taking opportunity of the active involvement of officials and politicians in panchayat polls, Andhra officials again strayed into Kotia panchayat in Koraput district and distributed land pattas to the residents, Saturday.

The officials strayed into the area, despite the state government and district administration directing them time and again not to meddle in the affairs of Odisha and to keep off from Kotia panchayat.

The officials after straying into Kotia panchayat conducted a meeting at Dhulipadar village in the panchayat, distributed passbook of land pattas to over 452 villagers. The passbook was distributed to the villagers in the meeting presided over by the VRO Sarojini of Talaganjeipadar village. Former sarpanch Bishu Gemel and other villagers who were supporting Andhra



government's encroachment bid were present at the meeting. Reportedly, the Andhra Pradesh government plans to provide land pattas to over 531 persons in coming days. The fresh bid by Andhra officials has come as warning bell for the district officials of Koraput district who are now actively engaged in the panchayat polls currently underway in the state. Meanwhile, all the three mainstream parties have fielded a joint candidate to thwart the repeated encroachment bids by Andhra Pradesh officials in Kotia panchayat which is a part of Koraput district.

SIX DISTRICTS AWAIT SAFE DRINKING WATER FROM 20 MEGA PROJECTS  
OMBADC-aided projects at snail's pace

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, Feb 6:** Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) has funded 20 mega drinking water projects in six districts of the state. However, those have failed to provide drinking water to the residents in Angul, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Jajpur districts.

According to a source, construction of the mega projects, which had commenced in phases since 2018, is still underway. A total of ₹4,423.37 crore was sanctioned for the purpose and funds to the tune of ₹3,100.59 crore were provided by January 31 this year. Out of the provided funds, ₹2,691.38 crore (nearly 87 per cent) has already been spent on these 20 mega projects, the source added.

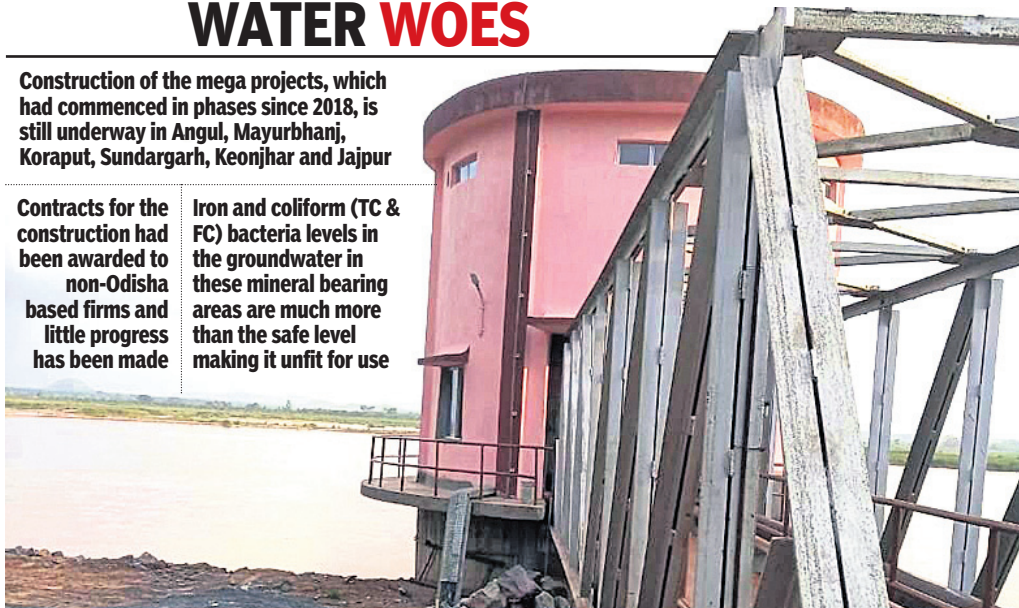
Allegedly, contracts for the construction had been awarded to non-Odisha based firms namely Nagarjun Construction Company (NCC), Larsen and Toubro (L&T) Limited, Voltas and Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL) and little progress has been made.

WATER WOES

Construction of the mega projects, which had commenced in phases since 2018, is still underway in Angul, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Jajpur

Contracts for the construction had been awarded to non-Odisha based firms and little progress has been made

Iron and coliform (TC & FC) bacteria levels in the groundwater in these mineral bearing areas are much more than the safe level making it unfit for use



It is pertinent to mention, Supreme Court had earlier ordered the state government in 2017 to collect penalties to the tune of ₹18,000 crore from the leaseholders who had conducted illegal mining

in these six districts. OMBADC was formed with the fund for development.

It was then decided to spend the funds available with OMBADC in seven different sectors for develop-

ment of the mineral bearing areas. Those sectors include drinking water supply, education (training and skill development), healthcare (including Anganwadi centres), lives and livelihoods, rural connectivity, en-

vironmental safety and pollution control, water conservation and recharging of the groundwater. The apex court had also instructed that all expenses must have requisite approval from the Board of Directors and oversight authorities.

Iron and total coliform (TC) as well as faecal coliform (FC) levels in the groundwater in mineral bearing areas of the six districts are much more than the safe level approved by the government and hence it is not usable. This was confirmed after a testing of groundwater samples collected by Odisha State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) from Kaliapani, TISCO locality, Saruabila and Kamardha areas in Jajpur in 2018.

It is said that hundreds of residents in these six districts suffer from kidney-related ailments and, even at times, die eventually.

Recently, the Engineer-in-Chief of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) has issued a circular to the executive engineers concerned instructing them to expedite the 20 mega drinking water projects.

Floating bridge vessel gets stranded in Chilika

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Satapada, Feb 6:** A floating bridge vessel which was ferrying a number of passengers on board including two buses got stranded in Chilika lake Sunday forenoon. This was the second such incident in the past 17 days.

A source informed that the floating bridge was on its way to Jahnkuda from Satapada. It got stuck for nearly two hours after deviating from its course in the lake.

"The floating bridge is managed by the Chilika Development Authority (CDA). It was ferrying people across the lake and proceeding to Jahnkuda under Krushnaprasad block in Puri when the incident took place. The bridge vessel got detached from the main channel and stuck midway. It was carrying 10 two-wheelers and two buses along with around 50 passengers," the source said.

The incident was caused by reduced water level in this stretch in Chilika lake. Efforts are on to push the stranded ferry ahead and help it move to Jahnkuda.

Notably, over 60 passengers were stranded in the middle of Chilika lake after the bridge vessel ferrying them got stuck midway, January 20.

Interstate cyber fraudster gang busted; five arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, Feb 6:** Police busted an interstate cyber fraudster gang in Balasure and arrested five cyber fraudsters Sunday with a seizure of cash worth ₹3.69 lakh from them.

According to reports, Jyotsnarani Patra, a resident of Balligohira under Nilagiri NAC, had made two fixed deposits worth ₹10 lakh at IndusInd Bank near Fakirmohan Golei, September 23, 2020. Besides, she had made savings of ₹2.45 lakh.

However, cyber criminals had hacked into her savings account and fixed deposits. They managed to withdraw ₹12.45 lakh.

Patra had filed an FIR at the Balasure cyber police station about vanishing of funds from her accounts December 29, 2021.

Police registered a case and started an investigation and arrested the five fraudsters.

Cash worth ₹3.69 lakh was seized from them. Addressing a



presser here, IIC of the cyber crime police station Minarani Bindhani said that a 12-member team of police officials had been formed which first arrested RMD Rahi (25) from Sundargarh district in this connection. During interrogation, Rahi revealed the names of the other accomplices.

Later the police team went to Kolkata, Bihar and Jharkhand. They arrested Samim Ahmed (32) of Murshidabad and Nija Hussain (28) of Tallulah from various hotels of West Bengal, Md Ansari (25) from Deoghar district in Jharkhand and Sajid Iqbal (18) from Sirsha district in Bihar.

Steel City girl one step away from K-pop dream

SHREYA, AN 18-YEAR-OLD GIRL FROM ROURKELA, CAN PUT THE STATE ON THE K-POP MAP IF SHE IS CHOSEN FROM AMONG THE TWO FINALISTS OF A WORLDWIDE AUDITION TO SELECT THE FIFTH MEMBER OF THE 'BLACKSWAN' MUSICAL GROUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 6:** Just like millions of people across the world, Shreya Lenka was swept by the Korean wave. She dreamt of performing live in a stadium filled with K-pop lovers.

Little did Lenka realise she will also create ripples at being on the cusp of becoming a part of the phenomenon.

The 18-year-old from Rourkela, the Steel City of Odisha, can put the state on the Korean popular music or K-pop map if she is chosen from among the two finalists of a worldwide audition to select the fifth member of the 'Blackswan' musical group. "It feels surreal," she told PTI from South Korea in an email conversation.

"This is like taking a step towards achieving my dream. Though, I still have a long way to go," she said.

Lenka, who has been a trained dancer since she was 12, was introduced to K-pop by a friend a few years ago. She found the choreography in the music videos very attractive and got hooked onto its unique style of singing and dancing.

The teenager got into K-pop because of 'Exo' and subsequently fell in love with songs by the 'BTS', 'Stray Kids' and 'The Boyz'.

"The list keeps on growing every day as I'm learning something new about K-pop and exploring new songs," she said.

In 2020, she saw K-pop record labels open online auditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and decided to give it a shot.

"When I seriously started to audition, I found it was necessary to learn Korean. So, I downloaded online applications and started practising," the class 11 student said.



She also started watching a lot of Korean dramas and began to pick up words from there. Some of her favourite actors are Lee Jong-suk and Song Joong-ki.

The family members have been her pillar of support. When they learnt that she was applying for K-pop auditions, her grandmother introduced her to a classical music

teacher. She referred to available online videos or western music.

"I have had the privilege of training under noted choreographers in Odisha who took me under their wing despite my family's financial constraints just because they saw potential," she said.

She has a dual advantage - her short stint in learning Odissi helped

her improve subtle nuances and yoga benefited her in developing flexibility.

Last year, record label DR Music announced the competition with categories of vocal, rap and dance after Hyeme left the K-pop girl group.

Lenka's biggest strength is the overwhelming support she had been receiving after qualifying in the first round of auditions. In India, the love for K-pop is growing hard and fast.

In the final round, DR Music has devised a six-month-long basic training programme to evaluate the skills and personality as part of the development in becoming a K-pop artiste.

Korean language education, dance and vocal training are part of the training, which started in December. The firm is expected to announce by May who will become the fifth member of 'Blackswan'.

BJD, BJP eye clean sweep in ZP polls

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, Feb 6:** Campaign for the three-tier panchayat elections is in full swing in Kalahandi district with Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress leaving no stone unturned to grab votes and win as many Zilla Parishad (ZP) seats as possible.

Both the BJD and BJP have set their sight on making a clean sweep in ZP polls here this time. There are 36 ZP seats spread in 13 blocks of this district.

Ganatantra Parishad had first formed Zilla Parishad in Kalahandi in 1961. Since then, six leaders of different political parties had held the post of the ZP chairperson.

In 2002, Sharmistha Meher



of the BJP was made the ZP chairperson. In 2012, BJD's Srimati Majhi was made its chairperson.

In 2017, the BJP for the second time grabbed the post of the ZP chairperson. Namitarani Sahu was made the ZP chairperson. In the 2017 panchayat elections, the BJP led by Bhawanipatana MLA Pradipta Kumar Nayak had made a clean sweep in the ZP polls. The saffron party grabbed 33 out of 36 ZP seats in the district.

However, Nayak being indisposed now has been away from the organisational activities for over eight months. In his absence, MP Basant Panda has taken up the baton of party's organisational activities and campaign. However, how far Panda will hand out electoral success to the party remains to be seen.

Pradipta Nayak being inactive now in the organisational activities has provided an opportunity to the BJD to fight back and reclaim the ZP

zones. Energy Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra is looking after electioneering of the party for the panchayat polls. According to political observers, his image has allegedly taken a beating after opposition parties linked him with murder of school teacher Mamita Meher. Despite this, the state leadership of the BJD has handed out the charge of electioneering in the panchayat polls to him. It may be a tough challenge for Mishra to bring about electoral success for the party.

However, former Congress MP Bhakta Charan Das has not fallen behind in leading the campaign for the party. Party's top leadership has reposed faith on Das' organisational skills and able leadership to win back some ZP seats.

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Name of Account / Name & Address of the Borrower / A/c. No.	Name & Address of Guarantors / Owners of property	Description of the Property mortgaged / charged	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Dues Amount
<b>Borrower: Sri Raj Kumar Sahu, S/o: Gudiya Narsim Sahu, At: Ward No. 5, Thanapara, Dist.: Sundergarh, PIN-770001 (Odisha) / A/c. No.: 37885266732 (CC) &amp; 37885225491 (TL)</b>	<b>Guarantor: Gudiya Narsim Sahu, S/o: Gudiya Narayan Sahu, At: Ward No. 5, Thanapara, Dist.: Sundergarh, PIN-770001 (Odisha) / Property Owner: Gudiya Narsim Sahu</b>	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land & Building standing in the name of Gudiya Narsim Sahu, bearing Khata No.: 86/14, Plot No.: Ac.0.055dec., Plot No.: 682/1799, Area: Ac.0.045dec., Total Area: Ac.0100dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, situated at Mouza: Sundergarh Town, Dist.: Sundergarh, Odisha	25.10.2021	03.02.2022	₹29,19,441/- as on 25.10.2021 + further interest from 26.10.2021, costs & expenses thereon
<b>Borrower: M/s Dream Cashew &amp; Cashew, Represented by its Prop.: Mohammed Danish, House No.: 104, Sl. No.: 314, Ward No. 16, At: Dumernunda, PO: Bamra, Dist.: Sambalpur, PIN-768221 (Odisha) / A/c. No.: 37644089304 (TL), 37912371579 (CC), 38650922900 (TL-2), 39379842755 (GCL-WCTL), 40101156581 (WCTL) &amp; 40101283837 (FITL)</b>	<b>Property Owner: Mohammed Danish</b>	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land & Building standing in the name of Mohammed Danish, bearing Khata No.: 342/357, Plot No.: 1085/2015, Area: Ac.0.200dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, situated at Mouza: Gobindpur Town Unit No. 2, Dumernunda Bada, Tahasil: Bamra, Dist.: Sambalpur	26.10.2021	03.02.2022	₹84,05,954/- as on 25.10.2021 + further interest from 26.10.2021, costs & expenses thereon

Date: 04.02.2022  
Place: Sambalpur

Sd/- Authorised Officer  
State Bank of India

FOCUS ENVIRONMENT

# FINANCING ECO CRIMES



**By destroying ecosystems and depleting natural assets, environmental crimes destroy livelihoods, undermine governing institutions, and impede our ability to address climate change**

But none of this negates the need for stronger action from governments, beginning with the broader application and tougher enforcement of AML rules. Unfortunately, major barriers to progress remain, not least the challenge of discerning illicit financial flows linked to environmental crimes, particularly when they are blended with untainted financial flows.

Furthermore, enforcement depends on national regulators, which have widely varying resources and capabilities. Often, regulators face pressure to avoid imposing a burden that could make their jurisdictions less attractive to financial institutions or have short-term development consequences for livelihoods and communities.

Collective action could help to overcome these barriers, but it invariably proceeds slowly and produces conservative outcomes. That is why F4B recommends the development of targeted mechanisms, drawing lessons from those that have been put in place to rid supply chains of evils like slavery and corruption. For example, the Kimberley Process – an international, multi-stakeholder initiative that increased transparency in the diamond industry – has helped to reduce trade in so-called conflict diamonds.

The financial community would do well to embrace such an approach. By championing a multi-stakeholder process that makes good on their commitments to rid their investment portfolios of links to environmental crime, financial actors could mitigate litigation and reputational risks and help to ensure that regulations are well designed. Supporting, profiting from, and ultimately perpetuating environmental crimes may be largely unintentional. But when it comes to protecting people and the planet, it is action that counts.

*The writer is Chair of Finance for Biodiversity.*  
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One of the most profitable global criminal enterprises is one you might not expect. It is crimes like illegal fishing and logging, waste trafficking, and trade in wildlife. And the financial sector is reaping huge rewards from these assaults against the natural environment on which we depend.

It is difficult to overstate the damage environmental crimes cause. By destroying ecosystems and depleting natural assets, such crimes destroy livelihoods, undermine governing institutions, and impede our ability to address climate change.

As a new report by Finance for Biodiversity (F4B) points out, such crimes generate up to \$280 billion each year, decreasing tax revenues by some \$30 billion per year, with poorer, environmentally rich countries losing the most. Financial institutions sustain the incentive – often unwittingly – by investing in enterprises that benefit from such crimes. Through the profits made from these investments, these institutions effectively launder the proceeds of environmental crime.

Anti-money-laundering (AML) rules are supposed to prevent the conversion of proceeds from illegal activities into clean money. For example, tightened rules and strengthened enforcement in recent years have made it more difficult to finance terrorism. But inadequate information and technology shortfalls hamper such efforts, with regulators struggling to keep up with increasingly sophisticated approaches to obfuscating the sources of funds.

When it comes to environmental crimes, the application of AML rules is particularly weak. To its credit, the Financial Action Task Force – the inter-governmental agency charged with combating money laundering and financing of terrorism – has raised its profile in this area. But significant action has remained largely confined to the illegal wildlife trade – a criminal enterprise that, despite affecting thousands of wildlife

species and millions of people, is only a small part of the problem.

But even if existing AML rules were applied to more environmental crimes, it would not be enough. As the F4B report shows, the returns on investment derived from environmental crimes would also have to be subject to AML rules.

Financial institutions, including pension funds, not only provide channels through which perpetrators of environmental crimes launder the profits; they also invest in nature-dependent sectors such as food, wood products, and infrastructure, the profitability of which can be increased through environmental crime. For example, illegal logging can make more land available for agricultural production, thereby lowering costs, increasing output, and improving quality. The result is higher profits for businesses – and bigger returns for their investors. While the investments may technically be legal, the returns are partly derived from criminal activity, thus amounting to illicit proceeds that must be regulated accordingly.

In theory, financial institutions already have an incentive not to support businesses that are benefiting from environmental crimes: Such firms face the threat of fines or even the forced suspension of some activities, making them a riskier bet

for investors. But the risks are too small to be an effective deterrent to investors; in most cases, environmental laws are poorly enforced and, where fines are imposed, they are usually small.

But if credit risks do not deter investors, growing reputational risks might. As increasingly sophisticated data-driven public campaigning connects the dots between investments and specific environmental crimes, financial institutions will become increasingly vulnerable to public backlash against their destructive investments.

It helps that new mandatory environmental due-diligence requirements – most immediately on deforestation – will soon come into force in key jurisdictions, including the European Union and the United Kingdom. In Brazil – where widespread environmental crimes have grave global implications – the central bank is already incorporating social, environmental, and climate factors into financial regulation.

As disclosure increases, so will public-interest litigation of environmental crimes. Already, climate litigation is beginning to have some success, building on a long history of legal action against companies for complicity in illegal activities within their value chains.



Simon Zadek

**IT IS DIFFICULT TO OVERSTATE THE DAMAGE ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES CAUSE**

## Olympian Politics

You must abstain from thinking about someone when you cannot think well of him.

THE MOTHER



China remains as inscrutable as ever, even as the Winter Olympics in Beijing February 4-20 has virtually turned into a political war of attrition between China and Russia on one side and the USA and its allies on the other. India, which two months back announced it would support the games when the US-led diplomatic boycott was being formulated, is now forced to join the boycott bandwagon. What China has done to India is indeed adding insult to injury that left India with no other option. It does not make any sense for China to further politicise the already politicised mega event by making a commander, involved in the 2020 border clashes with India at Galwan Valley in Ladakh, an Olympic torchbearer in the customary torch relay leading up to the Games. The last-minute boycott leading to India's top envoy in Beijing sitting out the opening ceremony added a new twist to the politics over the Games after the Western nations had launched their own diplomatic absence in protest against China's human rights record. No wonder the spokesperson of India's Minister of External Affairs articulated the government's stand that "it is indeed regrettable the Chinese side has chosen to politicise an event like the Olympics." He also announced the top diplomat at the Indian Embassy in Beijing would not be attending the opening or the closing ceremony.

It was indeed humiliating for India to watch People's Liberation Army (PLA) commander Qi Fobao being honoured as one of 1,200 people to bear the Olympic torch as it moved across the Olympic competition zones in the lead-up to the lighting of the Olympic cauldron. Chinese basketball superstar and former NBA player Yao Ming and astronaut Jing Haipeng were among other honourees to carry the flame alongside Qi on the relay's opening day. China cannot plead ignorance of the political implication of Qi being a torchbearer as the latter has been hailed a hero in China for his role of fighting in the deadly 2020 India-China skirmish in the Himalayan region that left at least 20 Indian soldiers dead. Qi sustained a head wound during the fighting. China admitted four PLA soldiers had lost their lives in the hostilities, though later reports suggest the casualties on the Chinese side were higher. The inclusion of Qi among the Olympic torchbearers has been rightly taken exception to by India which has accused China of politicising an event meant to be a 'peaceful competition' among nations.

The reaction by prominent Chinese commentator Hu Xijin, former editor of the nationalist state-owned tabloid the Global Times, is one more exercise in obfuscation by China. He hit back on India writing on Twitter: "What I saw from it (Qi's participation in the games ceremony) was a call for China-India border peace and call for world peace. What's wrong with this?" He will obviously not find fault with the Chinese position.

Playing politics with the Olympic Games is nothing new and is an offshoot of the super-power rivalry between the USA and erstwhile USSR. This time it is the US President Joe Biden who decided to continue with the tactic in a new form by announcing a diplomatic boycott of the event by taking exception to human rights violations of the minorities in China. This symbolic act meant the sportspersons of the countries involved in the boycott will not be deprived of the opportunity to show their skill before international competitors, but the countries would not send any delegation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies. The very nature of the form of protest drew criticism from many as it is nothing more than symbolic. It was even pointed out that Biden resorted to this tactic to boost his sagging morale following the flawed withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and his popularity curve going down in his country.

The cause of sports and games suffered further when the conflict between Russia on the one hand and the USA and the European Union (EU) countries on the other over the massing of Russian troops along the borders of Ukraine was dragged into the Beijing Olympics arena. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping hogged the limelight of the inauguration in the midst of diplomatic boycott by a host of countries. The two made the most of the opportunity by holding a meeting on the sidelines of the Games and accused the USA and its allies of 'politicising' the event by interfering with China's domestic affairs, meaning the situation in Xinjiang where Uyghur Moslems are being allegedly persecuted and its handling of Hong Kong and Tibet. As if this is not enough, China's foreign minister said Russia's arguments for mobilising its forces along Ukraine's borders are worth considering while the Russian side, in its official statement, has categorically supported China on its stand on the independence of Taiwan as not being an acceptable fact. This means Russia and China have closed ranks to take on the USA. Russia fears Ukraine will be included in the NATO group under the leadership of the USA which will pose a direct threat to it. By a queer turn of international politics, the USA has become the common foe of Russia and China. The stakes are so high for China that it appears to have deliberately overlooked the fact that it has economic interests in Ukraine. Of course, Putin has announced during his stay in Beijing that Russia would supply gas to China. This and the advantage of getting Russia on its side in its fight with the USA seems to have far outweighed the benefits China gets from Ukraine.

The tit for tat politics by China and Russia to safeguard their respective interests is only expected. But, rubbing India up the wrong way by including Qi is a clear indication by China that it does not bother about its southern neighbour. This is especially so when the two countries are still engaged in border talks and disengagement. Perhaps China wants to send the message across to India that it has not taken kindly India's bonhomie with the USA and its allies in the latter's strategy of checkmating China's influence in the South China Sea and Indo-Pacific regions. The idea, it appears, is to bring home to India that when it can confront the USA, it can trifle with India. India needs to give a befitting answer to China, if it wants to prove wrong the image being sought to be created by China that it is scared and is cowering before the Red Dragon.

SPECTRUM UNION BUDGET

## Regressive & contractionary



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

**THE BUDGETARY OUTLAY OF INDIA AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP IS SHRINKING AND MUCH LOWER THAN MANY COUNTRIES**

The Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for 2022-23 has evoked mixed reactions. A Budget is not evaluated in terms of schemes or some allocations only as revenues and outlay increase every year and any finance minister can have some schemes. A Budget can be called expansionary if projection of GDP is correct and the increase in budgetary outlay is higher than projected nominal GDP growth.

Sitharaman has prepared the Budget with assumption that real GDP will grow by 8 to 8.5% while nominal GDP by 11.1% to touch ₹258 lakh crore. However, the budgeted total expenditure is projected to be ₹39.45 lakh crore, which is not only lesser than projected nominal GDP growth but amounts to slashing expenditure in real terms (taking inflation into account). The total budgetary outlay for 2021-22 which was estimated to be ₹34.83 lakh has increased to ₹37.70 lakh crore in the revised estimate. However, the growth projection is made with assumptions that the situation will be normal. But normal situation is rarely feasible.

Further, the budgetary outlay of India as a percentage of GDP is shrinking and much lower than many countries. By December 2020, the government expenditure as a percentage of GDP in India was

18.4%, much lower than France at 62.1%, Norway 58.4%, Eurozone 54.1%, Sweden 52.6%, the UK 52%, Belgium 60%, Italy 57.3%, Germany 51.1%, the US 44%, and Japan 38.7%. What is worrying is that as a percentage of GDP the total expenditure has come down from 17.7% in 2020-21 to 16.2% in 2021-22 and is estimated to decline further to 15.3% in 2022-23. This establishes that the Budget is contractionary.

India has the ignominy of having the highest number of hungry and poor people in the world. Hence, subsidy to poor and farmers is an integral part of any Budget to help the vulnerable sections and ensure distributive justice. But, while the present government is consistent in giving huge concession to corporates and the rich, it harbours disdain for the poor and farmers which is reflected through the reduction of subsidies. The fertilizer subsidy has been reduced by 25% to ₹1,05,222 crore in 2022-23 from ₹1,40,112 in the previous fiscal. The food subsidy has been reduced to ₹2,06,481 crore from ₹2,86,219 crore. The fuel subsidy, which was ₹38,256 crore in 2019-20, has been gradually reduced to ₹5,812.5 crore.

By contrast, due to more concessions, reduction of corporate tax in past, the effective corporate tax has been reduced to 22.54% in 2019-20 from 27.81% in 2018-19. In this Budget, corporate surcharge have

been reduced from 12% to 7%.

The Budget assumes that the present economic malaise is triggered by supply-side constraints. Actually, the problem is on the demand side. The household spending measured through private final consumption expenditure is still 3% below the pre-pandemic level. The grim reality is that due to draconian demonetisation and flawed GST, the economy has slowed down with demand receding. The pandemic has just exacerbated the situation, corroding purchasing power of people and squeezing demand.

The Budget comes at a time when the economy has assumed the dangerous K-shape of recovery with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. While stock market is booming, real economy is crumbling. The GDP for 201-22 is only 1.3% higher than the pre-pandemic level and last two years have been wasted fully with people being beleaguered by excruciating experience of pandemic. Poor Indians saw erosion of their purchasing power and demand due to unprecedented rise of prices of essential commodities. While the Economic Survey ignored this stating that it was imported inflation, the Budget failed to address the problem.

The finance minister had a golden opportunity to address these problems by presenting a progressive Budget and change our regressive

tax system. But she presented a regressive Budget by relying more on indirect taxes, making the lives of poor more miserable as indirect taxes are paid by the rich and the poor at the same rate.

Despite boasting of higher GST, projected tax revenue growth is only 9.6%, which is less than projected nominal GDP growth. The Centre's gross tax-GDP ratio, which is one of the lowest in world, is expected to decline to 10.7% in 2022-23 from 10.8% in 2021-22. The Centre's debt as proportion of GDP is likely to cross 60% as against the target of 40% prescribed by IMF.

When enhancement of capital expenditure by 35% is celebrated nobody tells that as many as 439 infrastructure projects, each entailing investment of ₹150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns totalling more than ₹4.38 lakh crore. It is said that the Budget opted for lasting benefits not temporary relief. The finance minister also stated that the Budget gives a blueprint of the economy from India at 75 to India at 100. She further said that the Budget for the next fiscal "will focus on Amrit Kaal." But in the long run, everybody is dead. When it is difficult for large section of Indians to survive today, how can they dream of future?

*The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist. Views are personal.*

WISDOM CORNER

- What the caterpillar calls the end of the world the master calls a butterfly. **RICHARD BACH**
- Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect. **MARK TWAIN**
- It isn't the mountains ahead to climb that wear you out; it's the pebble in your shoe. **MUHAMMAD ALI**

WORDSWORTH

Rule of thumb

The expression rule of thumb has been recorded since 1692 and probably wasn't new then. It meant then what it means now – some method or procedure that comes from practice or experience, without any formal basis. Some have tried to link it with brewing; in the days before thermometers, brewers were said to have gauged the temperature of the fermenting liquor with the thumb (just as mothers for generations have tested the temperature of the baby's bath water with their elbows). This seems unlikely, as the thumb is not that sensitive and the range of temperatures for fermentation between too cool and too warm is quite small. It is much more likely that it comes from the ancient use of bits of the body to make measurements. There were once many of these: the unit of the foot comes from pacing out dimensions; the distance from the tip of the nose to the outstretched fingers is about one yard; horse heights are still measured in hands (the width of the palm and closed thumb, now fixed at four inches); and so on. There was an old tailors' axiom that "twice around the thumb is once around the wrist", which turns up in Gulliver's Travels. It's most likely that the saying comes from the length of the first joint of the thumb, which is about an inch. So the phrase rule of thumb uses the word rule in the sense of ruler, not regulation, and directly refers to this method of measurement. However, it was only in 1976 that the traditional phrase rule of thumb became directly associated with this spurious legal maxim, through a bit of wordplay in a report that was misunderstood by readers.

Be a Roman in Rome

Sir, The raging row over 'hijab' in Karnataka is highly disturbing. Political meddling has further aggravated the issue. No one should dictate terms to the college management. If uniform has been made mandatory, students should learn to obey and behave like disciplined students. Education and religion should not be mixed. At the most, the students can be allowed to have liberty to wear hijab till they reach the prayer hall, if any, and classroom. One of the students has threatened that she would rather sacrifice her life but not hijab. One of the Muslim leaders in a TV channel has expressed that even if the court delivers adverse verdict, the matter would be taken to the doorstep of the Supreme Court. Nobody can prevent anybody from moving the Supreme Court. But an expression of this kind sends a concealed message to the High Court not to give a verdict that could be questioned in Supreme Court. The government of Karnataka is right in issuing an order to wear uniform in government colleges or private colleges where wearing uniform has been made mandatory. Once, in Parliament, the Sikhs insisted that it is their right to carry kirpan (sword) to the House as per their religious practice. But the demand of the Member was not conceded. One should be a Roman in Rome. **KV Seetharamaih, BANGALORE**

Boost to natural farming

Sir, The government's plan to introduce natural farming in agri education curriculum is a welcome step. Its introduction in the curriculum at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels will help students understand the adverse effects of conventional agricultural practices and the need to implement natural farming which enhances agro ecosystem health. Students could play a crucial role in promoting natural farming. They could influence their parents to shun chemical farming methods and take up natural methods. Indian Council of Agricultural Research has decided to include natural farming in the syllabus at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. It is a common practice that the students of agriculture rarely utilise their knowledge in practical farming in view of several hardships involved in agriculture. The new subject will equip the students with key skills and knowledge related to sustainable agriculture. The new introduction will therefore immensely benefit the students naturally and create interest in those who want to take up agriculture as their profession after completion of their studies. **Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD**

## 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**

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# national

## of the day quote

The pilot movement of foodgrains on vessel through inland waterways from Patna in Bihar to Pandu in Guwahati is an important step to connect eastern and North-East parts of the country

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTER

We did something politically very brave. We decided we will not take back people (into the party) who have defected and soiled the political landscape of Goa. BJP ministers (in Goa) were ready to join but Rahul Gandhi, Dinesh Gundu Rao (state in charge), Girish Chodankar (Goa unit chief), Digambar Kamat (Leader of Opposition) and the party decided not to accept them

RANDEEP SURJEWALA | CONGRESS LEADER

They fired bullets at me because I dared to look into the eyes of BJP and tell the truth. Those who fired at me are the very people who had murdered Mahatma Gandhi. If you kill one Owaisi, lakhs of Owaisis will be born

ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM NATIONAL PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Two killed

**Gurugram:** Two men from Gurugram were killed when their scooter was allegedly ran over by a speeding car, police said. The accident occurred at Atul Kataria Chowk when the victims, Sanjeev, 45, and Keval Kumar, 46, were returning home on Friday evening. The car driver, Abdul Raheem, a resident of Uttarakhand, has been arrested. According to the police, the victims were rushed to the general hospital in Sector-10 where the doctors declared them dead.

### Eight injured

**Ranchi:** Two groups of inmates clash inside the Children's Correctional Home here on early Sunday, leaving eight juveniles injured, a police officer said. They were hospitalised and the condition of four was stated to be serious, Ranchi's Senior Superintendent of Police Surendra Jha said.

### Guns seized

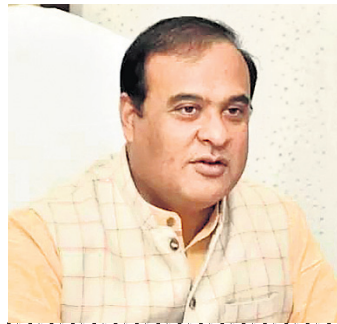
**Malda (WB):** A 20-year-old man has been arrested and four country-made guns have been seized from his possession in West Bengal's Malda district, police said Sunday. Acting on a tip-off, police arrested one Royel Sheikh, a resident of Manikchak in the district, and seized the firearms from his possession at Chandipur Bridge in Englishbazar police station area on Saturday evening, an officer said.

### Girl rescued

**Simdega:** A 17-year-old girl was rescued in Jharkhand's Simdega district when she was being trafficked to Delhi, police said Sunday. A trafficker, identified as Suman Billung, was taking the girl to Delhi on the pretext of providing her job, they said.

### Probe ordered

**Kathua/Jammu:** A 35-year-old suspected drug peddler allegedly hanged himself inside a police lockup in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district on Sunday, prompting the authorities to order a magisterial inquiry, officials said. Three policemen were placed under suspension and the station house officer (SHO) concerned was attached to the district police lines as the police also ordered a separate departmental inquiry, they said.



Assam needs to change its mindset and adopt a work culture that will put an end to dependency on others

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

## RARE SPECIES OF TURTLES RECOVERED

The Railway Protection Force personnel have recovered 235 rare species of turtles from a passenger train at the Kamakhya railway station in Guwahati Saturday, officials said



# 3 witch-hunt cases in J'khand per day, 1K killed in 22 yrs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, Feb 6:** Jharkhand, which was carved out of Bihar in 2000, records three incidents of witch hunt violence per day and at least 1,000 people have been murdered due to the superstition in the past 22 years and 90 per cent victims are women.

Chutni Devi from Jharkhand's Beerbans village in Saraikela-Kharsawan district, who faced extreme atrocities in the name of witch, was conferred with the fourth highest civilian award Padma Shri by President Ram Nath Kovind last year for rescuing and helping hundreds of women who have been facing atrocities over the years. When the daughter of a neighbour fell ill, Chutni was blamed for that and branded as witch. Panchayat imposed a fine of Rs 500 on her and charged that she wanted to kill the neighbour's daughter.

Chutni gave the fine but when the neighbour's daughter didn't recover from illness, on the very next day, a group of 40 to 50 people attacked her house. She was dragged out of the house, mercilessly beaten and she was stripped too.

After the horrifying experience, Chutni started working for the upliftment of women and the fight against the superstition. Chutni's campaign is still continuing but the roots of evil is so deep in Jharkhand that such incidents continue even today.



In 2022 itself, five incidents of witch violence have been reported in the state. On January 2, few people superstitiously declared a woman of Lukya village in Sisai police station area of Gumla district as witch. When the woman's sons Ajay and Sanjay Oraon protested

against it, ten people tied them to a pole and thrashed them mercilessly. Ajay faced severe injuries to his eye. Police lodged a complaint against ten people including village gram panchayat chief Lakiya Devi. On January 30, police arrested four people, including a nurse

Salomi Minj, working in Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) from Khunti for branding a woman as witch and murdering her. After killing the woman on January 27, the accused concealed the body in a car and left it in the forest under the Khunti police station area. During interrogation, Salomi said that her son Abhishek Tirkey had a sudden death and she had apprehension that her tenant Nora Lakda had taken his life by performing witchcraft.

On January 12, in Kudpani village in Thethai Tangar police station area in Simdega, a man identified as Florence held another woman Jhariyo responsible for the death of his wife and branded her as witch.

## Cops file FIR against eight Sena leaders

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Pune, Feb 6:** Eight Shiv Sena leaders were Sunday booked by the Pune Police for allegedly assaulting BJP leader Kirit Somaiya.

The FIR was lodged at Shivaji Nagar Police Station under sections 143, 147, 149, 341, 336, 337, 323, 504, 37(1), and 135 of the IPC. The FIR copy has been accessed by IANS.

Those who have been named as alleged accused in the FIR are Shiv Sena Pune President Sanjay More, Chandan Shalunke, Kiran Sali, Suraj Lokhande, Akash Shinde, Rupesh Panwar, Rajender Shinde and Shani Gavte.

Saturday, Kirit Somaiya had visited Pune Municipal Corporation when he was allegedly manhandled by Shiv Sena leaders.

Kirit Somaiya went to Pune Municipal Corporation to furnish a complaint in connection with alleged financial irregularities in the setting up of Covid-19 Jumbo Hospital.

On the other hand, Shiv Sena leaders have claimed innocence saying they only wanted to speak to Kirit Somaiya.

Somaiya said that he went to Pune Municipal Corporation, and submitted a complaint against Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut's family partner Sujan Patker Lifeline Hospital Management Services for COVID Centre Scam. Now he has lodged an FIR against eight Shiv Sena leaders. The Pune Police is looking into the matter.

# EC extends ban on roadshows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** The Election Commission Sunday extended the ban on roadshows, 'pad yatras', cycle and vehicle rallies but gave fresh relaxations for indoor and outdoor physical campaigning events for the polls citing reduction in COVID-19 cases.

The new relaxations will help political parties hold bigger physical campaigning events in the run up to the polls in the five states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur.

The campaigning for phase one of Uttar Pradesh assembly election on February 10 ends on February 8 evening. The Commission allowed opening up of physical campaigning events based on inputs received by state chief secretaries, its observers and the Union Health Ministry.

The Union Health Secretary told the EC on Saturday that the polling states are contributing a very small proportion of the total reported COVID-19 cases in the country.

In a statement, the EC said re-



IAN'S FILE PHOTO

strictions regarding "outdoor meetings, indoor meetings, rallies" will be further relaxed subject to condition that the number of persons attending these events will be limited to maximum of 50 per cent of the capacity of indoor halls and 30 per cent of the open ground capacity or as fixed by district election officer as per requirement of the social distancing norms, and whichever is less.

"If the state disaster management authority has set the ceiling limits or percentage of the capacity for number of persons attend-

ing indoor hall or open ground and they are stricter, SDMA guidelines will prevail," the EC said. "Open ground rallies" can be held only in the grounds specifically designated by the district authorities and subject to compliance of all the conditions of SDMA.

Allocation of these grounds will be given equitably by district administration through e-Suvidha portal on first come first serve basis, the EC pointed out.

Capacities of these grounds will be fixed by the district administration well in advance and notify to all the parties.

# PM bats for Yogi as UP's next CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Feb 6:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday indicated that Yogi Adityanath is the BJP's choice as the next chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, saying if his government is formed again he would make up for the time lost by the state due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The PM's remarks at a virtual poll rally went beyond praise for Adityanath for the work done by the state's BJP government during his term - and appeared to settle the debate over the party's CM face in these assembly elections.

The virtual rally, his third recently for UP, comes just days before the first phase of polling on February 10. He lashed out at the opposition Samajwadi Party over law and order when it was in power, just before Adityanath's government took charge in 2017.

The PM lauded what the BJP government has accomplished in the state and said if there hadn't



been the pandemic over the past two years, Adityanath would have done even better.

"If Yogi ji's government is formed again, the work of giving houses to the poor will be done faster," he said. Had the government's efforts not been spent on saving lives, the state would have reached another level under him, Modi added.

The PM said he believed that the people of Uttar Pradesh will give such overwhelming majority to the BJP for the coming five years that Adityanath will get the strength to accomplish such tasks. He also projected Adityanath as the next chief minister while mentioning the Centre's Ujjwala scheme that gives free cooking gas connections.

# U'khand BJP in soup over Rawat's morphed photo



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** The Election Commission has issued a notice to the Uttarakhand BJP for alleged violation of the model code and asked it to reply within 24 hours for tweeting a morphed image of former chief minister and Congress leader Harish Rawat, in which he has been shown as a Muslim cleric.

The action comes after the Congress complained to the poll body on Friday, alleging that the BJP Uttarakhand from its official Twitter handle on February 3 at 9.34 PM tweeted a morphed image of Rawat, wherein he has been falsely depicted as belonging to a particular community.

Congress leader Randeep Surjewala had spoken to the CEC Saturday and demanded the regis-

tration of an FIR against the BJP, while alleging that it has violated the model code and other provisions of the law, as it seeks to create disharmony on religious grounds between people of diverse faith.

The said tweet has since been removed. "Whereas, the Commission has carefully considered the matter and is of the considered view that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Uttarakhand has in violation of the clauses (1) & (2) laid down in the part 'General Conduct' of the Model Code of Conduct...Of Section-123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and sub-section (1)(a) of Section 153(A) of the Indian Penal Code 1860, made statements that are provocative and can seriously incite the emotions and lead to breakdown of law & order situation thereby adversely affecting the election process," the EC said in its notice sent last on February 5.

## MAKING A POINT



Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai interacting with students during the launch of Obbava Self Defence Art in Bangalore

# Learning from home takes a toll on skills of students

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** Schools, which are reopening after repeated closures to contain the spread of Covid-19, are now facing the challenge to fill the huge gap as lakhs of students have forgotten basic maths, fundamental skills of language courses and science.

Renowned academician C.S. Kandpal said the reopening of schools is not a routine thing as educational institutes have to start afresh. Schools cannot start from where they have left as due to repeated closures, the students are now lagging in the skill level they used to possess earlier.

Under such circumstances, if

students are assessed on the basis of previous processes or the studies are resumed from the previous level, then many students will be left behind, Kandpal claimed. The Union government's report itself says that schools, colleges and educational institutes were closed time and again to contain Covid-19, which has widely impacted students' learning capability. Most educational institutes have shifted the mode of study to online.

The report further adds that many students don't have smartphones for online studies due to which their education is badly affected. In the Economic Survey, it was said that the pandemic affected the education system, due to



which lakhs of students suffered. According to Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2021, the smartphone availability increased

to 67.6 per cent in 2021 from 36.5 per cent in 2018. As per the education ministry, in rural areas of the country, only 50 per cent of children

have access to smartphones.

The report added that children in junior classes faced a tough time studying online as compared to senior classes. Children have to face unavailability of smartphones and network issues too.

Centre for policy research president Yamini Aiyar said that due to being away from the schools, a huge learning gap has been reported among the students of junior classes. This learning gap needs to be bridged. Public policy and health system expert Dr Chandrakant Lahariya said that as per AIIMS, ICMR, Indian Academy of Paediatrics, NITI Aayog, UNICEF, WHO, small children have least danger from Covid. Closure of

schools impacted learning, mental and emotional health of the children, Dr Lahariya further added.

The Economic survey added that the government faces a new challenge as school closures have impacted education continuity. According to academicians, lakhs of students have dropped out due to school closures as proper infrastructure and resources are far from their reach.

Schools of 11 states of the country have been reopened, partially reopened in 16 states and still closed in nine states. A decision has been taken to reopen the schools in Delhi - for senior classes from February 7 and for all classes from February 14.

# TN Assembly to pass NEET Bill again

TAMIL NADU GOVERNOR RN RAVI HAD RETURNED THE EARLIER BILL PASSED SEPTEMBER 13, 2021, AFTER HOLDING IT WITH HIM FOR 142 DAYS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 6: The Tamil Nadu Assembly will meet February 8 once again as a special session to pass the Bill seeking exemption to the state from the National Entrance cum Eligibility Test (NEET). The Bill will be sent to Governor RN Ravi for his assent after he has returned the earlier one.

It may be noted that Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi had returned the earlier Bill passed September 13, 2021, after holding it with him for 142 days. A resolution to conduct a special session of the Assembly to pass the Bill was adopted at a meeting of 10 parties. The parties attended included DMK, Congress, PMK, MDMK, VCK, CPM, and CPI while AIADMK, BJP and Puratchi Bharatham boycotted the meeting. The resolution, which was passed by the 10 parties for a special session of the Assembly, said, "Getting an exemption from NEET alone will restore the rights of state governments over medical admissions and protect the interests of students hailing from poor and middle-class families. The views of the Governor on NEET Bill will be discussed threadbare during the special session of the Assembly and appropriate response will be put forth on the issue."



The resolution also said that the people of Tamil Nadu will never accept the suggestion of the Governor that the NEET Bill was against the interests of students, particularly those from rural areas and economically poor backgrounds. The resolution said that legal experts and fair-minded people have termed it wrong and the people of Tamil Nadu would never accept it.

The Chief Minister, while addressing the meeting of political parties, said that the Governor should have forwarded the Bill passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly immediately to the President. Stalin said that the Governor of Tamil Nadu failed to discharge his constitu-

tional duty by not forwarding the Bill to the President. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister said that in 2007, the then Governor of Tamil Nadu had given his assent to the Bill for abolishing the entrance examination in the state within 87 days of receiving it. He said that the present Governor had held on to the Bill for 142 days and returned it to the Speaker only after the MBBS admissions for the current academic year commenced. Meanwhile, AIADMK leader and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, O. Panneerselvam in a statement said that the party was against the NEET in the past and that it has opposed the NEET in the present and will oppose it in the future also.

# 'First-phase polling will be eye-opener for govt'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karhal (Mainpuri)/Agra, Feb 6: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav Sunday attacked the BJP government, saying the "eyes and ears of the government will open in the first phase itself," as farmers and youngsters have "made up their mind" to defeat the BJP.

It was Akhilesh Yadav's first meeting in Karhal after he filed his nomination papers from the assembly seat in the Mainpuri district. Karhal goes to the polls in the third phase February 20.

"The way the wind is blowing and seeing the atmosphere (of elections), it seems the eyes and ears of the (BJP) government will open in the first phase itself," said the former UP chief minister. "The government's eyes and ears, which have been staying closed till now, will open up in the first phase itself as the farmers and youngsters have made up their mind to defeat the BJP," Yadav asserted in the meeting.

Speaking in Agra earlier, he alleged that people are being threatened over the phone against voting for his party after it has emerged as a powerful contender in the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections. He also asked people to record such threatening calls so that based on them, FIRs could be lodged against his government comes to power. "Since the SP has emerged as a



**This election is for the future of UP and to save the Constitution. The BJP can do anything and nobody knows till they do it. Did anyone know demonetisation was going to be announced?**

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

powerful contender in the elections, people are being threatened over the phone. If anyone gets such

he asked as proof of his allegation.

Yadav also mocked Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who in a recent statement had said he would 'cool down' after March 10, the day for the announcement of elections result, those heightening passions.

"The chief minister is talking about cooling down. But we will only talk about announcing recruitments in the police for youngsters of the state," Yadav said.

The SP chief reiterated that his party will give 300 units of electricity free to domestic consumers and also give old pension to the government employees.

"The electricity bill gives an electric shock (to consumers). The BJP government has not set up a single power plant and we are forced to pay exorbitant rates of electricity. The 'transformer' of BJP will be 'fused' by the anger of voters," Yadav said, adding that the SP will give 300 units of free electricity to people after coming to power.

"The chief minister promised to distribute laptops and tablets but had anyone got anything? Farmers were forced to fence their farms and the money which is being released for the rehabilitation of stray cows is not reaching people," Yadav said.

"This chief minister can only change the name and colour so we should also bring some change," he added.



## POLL PREP

Policemen leave for election duty ahead of the first phase of polling for the upcoming UP Assembly elections at Police Line ground, in Prayagraj, Sunday.

# 525 jumbos died in TN in 5 yrs

Despite the alarming deaths, the Central government has not sanctioned any funds under the 'Project Elephant' initiative in the past two years

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 6: A study by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department has revealed that 525 wild elephants have died in the state in the last five years.

While 125 elephants lost their lives in 2017, 84 died in 2018, 108 in 2019, 110 in 2020, and 98 in 2021, according to the study. Despite the alarming deaths, the Central government has not sanctioned any funds under the 'Project Elephant' initiative in the past two years - 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Chief Wildlife warden of Tamil Nadu, Shekar Kumar Neeraj told IANS: "The lack of funding has severely created a block in the long-term conservation activities of the department. We have already submitted a proposal for Rs 20 crore under Project Elephant in Tamil Nadu. There are only 50 days left in the fiscal to get the funding and I understand that the delay was due to the introduction of Public



PICTURE USED FOR REPRESENTATION

Financial Management System (PFMS) for all Central schemes." He further said that the state was asked to upload the proposal in PFMS again and the department has already done that.

The state has already received funds under Project Tiger but Project Elephant funds are yet to be released, Neeraj added.

Tamil Nadu has received fewer funds compared to other south

Indian states like Kerala and Karnataka. While Kerala received Rs 23 crore between 2017 and 2021 and Karnataka got Rs 13 crore during the same period, Tamil Nadu was given only Rs 9.75 crore.

Tamil Nadu had 4,015 jumbos as per the 2012 wildlife census but according to the 2017 census, the state has only 2,761 wild elephants which indicates a sharp decline of 38 per cent.

# Exchange of candidates creates dissent in parties

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj, Feb 6: Exchange of candidates between parties in the ongoing elections is now creating problems for political parties that have fielded these turncoats.

The Samajwadi Party and the BJP, in particular, are facing issues over candidate selection in Prayagraj since both the parties have opted for 'outsiders', ignoring the claims of their own party leaders.

Bara MLA Ajay Kumar, who quit the BJP on February 2, has entered the poll fray on a Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) ticket now.

The BSP had earlier declared Shiv Prakash as its candidate from Bara but then Ajay Kumar was given preference after cancelling Shiv Prakash's ticket.

Ajay Kumar had **BATTLE FOR UP** revolved in the BJP because his Bara seat was being given to its ally Apna Dal (S).

Two of its sitting MLAs Rajamani Kol (Koraon) and Vikramjit Maurya (Phaphamau) have been denied tickets.

Aarti Kol, a former zila panchayat member, has been fielded from Koraon (SC) seat and Guru Prasad Maurya from Phaphamau seat. Maurya has previously been a BSP MLA and had later joined the BJP.

There is trouble on the Allahabad North seat on which BJP has a sitting MLA Harshvardhan Bajpai. However, the party has yet to declare its candidate from the seat.

There is also talk of BJP giving the seats of Karchana and Handia to its ally Nishad Party while handing over the seats of Bara, Pratappur and Soraon to its other

# Chandra Shekhar open to post poll pact with SP, BSP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gorakhpur, Feb 6: Chandra Shekhar Azad, the Bhim Army chief and the Azad Samaj Party (ASP) candidate from Gorakhpur, has said that though he is disappointed with the Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Vachaspati has switched sides and joined the Apna Dal (S) and entered the poll fray from Bara after SP fielded Ajay Munna from the seat, while party's former MP from Phulpur Nagendra Singh Patel, is also contesting the polls from Chail seat of Kaushambhi as an Apna Dal (S) candidate.

Senior party leaders who are lobbying for tickets are voicing their protest on the social media. Former SP MLA Haji Parvez Tanki, who had sought ticket from Allahabad South, recently held a meeting with hundreds of supporters and raised questions on the party's policies and ticket distribution. Through the social media, he is raising questions about Raiish Chandra Shukla, the SP candidate from Allahabad South.

Babban Dubey, who had claimed ticket from Allahabad South and had even put up posters and banners in his area, is now protesting after being denied a ticket.

Similarly, Richa Singh, who was the SP candidate from Allahabad West in 2017 election, is also opposing on Facebook the party's decision of denying her a ticket. By releasing photos, videos of SP candidate with BJP leaders, questions are being raised over ticket distribution.

"I respect Akhilesh Yadav but I cannot see people from other castes and religions suffering. He cheated me but I re-emerged as a stronger person and set up our andolan. I tied up with other smaller parties and formed the Samajik Parivartan Morcha. Why should people even vote for the Opposition parties? Have they fought for people or protected them from BJP's dictatorship? Akhilesh is saying that if elected, he will restore the old pension scheme but why didn't he do it when he was the chief minister from 2012 to 2017? However, we will see what happens after the elections and will do whatever is needed to stop BJP from coming to power."

Asked whether he was positioning himself as a Dalit leader, Chandra Shekhar said, "I am projected as a Dalit leader but I am working towards 'bahujan ekta'. I have fought for various issues like NEET quota, census for the OBC, CAA and NRC. I have set up youth leadership and given the poor an opportunity to work. Leaders like



Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati are more concerned about their own politics than people. What did Mayawati do for Dalits over the past five years? Holding rallies and asking for votes is not her only job. She should be standing with Dalits. I respect her but I cannot leave the Dalit samaj to die at BSP's hands."

On his contesting against chief minister Yogi Adityanath, Chandra Shekhar said that, "Yogi Adityanath was never a frontrunner for the post of chief minister. In fact, he was not even an MLA. BJP asked for votes on the basis of OBCs but made him the chief minister. An MP from his party has openly said that Yogi misbehaved with him. His other MLAs sat in protest against him. He is a dictator and when people take a stand against dictators, even strong leaders like Indra Gandhi end up losing elec-

# Madras HC orders formation of SIT to probe wildlife offences

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 6: The Madras High Court has directed Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Central government to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) with officers drawn from the two states and CBI, to probe wildlife offences.

A division bench comprising Justices V. Bharathidasan and N. Satish Kumar, on Friday, directed the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala to provide a list of officers to be included in the SIT by February 14 which must include serving police and forest officers of the respective states in the rank of Superintendents of Police and DFO.

The offences include poaching of animals, death of animals by electrocution, and other accidental deaths of elephants and other wild animals.

It also directed to include CBI Superintendent of Police N. Nirmala Devi who has been investigating several cases related to wildlife offences also to be included in the team.

The Court issued the interim directive following a batch of public interest litigations on poaching of animals as also electrocution of elephants and other wild animals and road and rail accidents. It also directed the Railways to make sure that elephants are not getting killed by speeding trains.

Three elephants, including a calf, had got killed after being hit by a speeding Mangalore-Chennai Express train in the stretch between Palakkad and Madukkarai. The court had then directed the Southern Railway and the Forest Department of Tamil Nadu to take measures including reducing speed of trains in the sector as well as employing more wildlife watchers during the night to prevent elephants to reach the tracks.

The court also directed the Southern Railway not to erect Solar fences till February 25 and to conduct discussions with the Chief Wildlife warden regarding the same and to take a decision on the basis of inputs received from him.





of the day quote

The SAD did not allow the saffron party to expand its base in Punjab HARDEEP SINGH PURI | UNION MINISTER

The Budget 2022-23 will create more job opportunities in the country through the development of infrastructure and other sectors BHUPENDRA YADAV | UNION MINISTER

The atmosphere in western UP indicates that the people have made up their minds to uproot the BJP and install the government of the Samajwadi Party and its allies AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

Arms supplier held

New Delhi: The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested an interstate arms supplier who was wanted in a shootout and arms trafficking case, an official said here Sunday. The accused, identified as Nazim Ali, 30, a resident of district Hapur, Uttar Pradesh, was arrested on February 3 near Murga Mandi, Gazipur, Delhi. "There was information in the Special Cell about the movements of Nazim Ali absconding for three months in a case of shoot out in the area of Amar Colony, Delhi," Deputy Commissioner of Police Jasmeet Singh said.

Fire breaks out

New Delhi: A fire broke out in the room of an Additional Sessions Judge at the Karkardooma Court in East Delhi, officials said Sunday. According to information, the fire erupted in the court room number 52 of Additional Sessions Judge Manjusha badhwa and at the corridor on the second floor of the five-storey building. The fire department received a call in this connection at around 3.30 a.m. A fire official said that initially six fire tenders were rushed to the spot, but six more were sent later to control the massive blaze. The fire was brought under control by 4.20 a.m. and there were no reports of any injuries.

Delhi man duped

New Delhi: The Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police has arrested two people for allegedly cheating a man of nearly Rs 9 crore on the pretext of providing antique items having radioactive properties that can be later sold to the US space agency NASA at higher price. The accused were identified as 44-year-old Amit Gupta, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad and 44-year-old Ganesh Ingole, a resident of Maharashtra. Furnishing details about the case, Delhi Joint Commissioner of Police (CP), Chhaya Sharma said a case was registered on the complaint of the victim Gautam Puri, who alleged that the accused persons -- Amit Gupta and Rakesh Goel -- approached him regarding sale of antique items that is, rice puller, radioactive mirror and antique articles and lured him to deal in the same.

IEDs recovered

Dhanbad: Two powerful IEDs, weighing 10 kg each, were recovered by security forces in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, police said Sunday. Acting on a tip-off, a search operation was launched by a team of police and 154 battalion CRPF, following which the recovery was made from the remote Ganeshpur village in Topchanchi police station area on Saturday, they said. The improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were planted at a road, targeting the security forces, they added.



The Narendra Modi government has failed to create jobs as promised in 2014 and it is "ruining" the lives of the youngsters HARDIK PATEL | CONGRESS LEADER

SNOWFALL AFTER 34 YEARS

Daria Hill near Itanagar received snowfall after 34 years and Rupa town in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district witnessed snowfall after two decades, official sources said



BSF thwarts major narcotic smuggling bid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 6: Three Pakistani intruders were gunned down Sunday by the BSF as it scuttled a major narcotic smuggling attempt and recovered 36 kgs heroin worth crores of rupees along the International Border in Samba sector of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

This was the fourth narcotic smuggling bid foiled by the BSF troops along the border this year, while a total of nine Pakistani intruders were eliminated in various such attempts in the past one year, Inspector General of Border Security Force (BSF), Jammu frontier, D K Boora said.

"We had a very good operation the previous night when the alert troops eliminated a narcotic smuggling attempt from Pakistan. The smugglers tried to take advantage of the darkness and foggy conditions to smuggle the huge quantity of narcotics into this side," Boora, who rushed to the border outpost Bainglar where his troops made the biggest recovery this year, told reporters.

Displaying the seized items, he said the surveillance equipment picked up the movement of the smugglers and accordingly the troops on the forward duty points were alerted. "When they reached near the border fence, they were challenged by the troops and subsequently all the three intruders were neutralised. The search of the area led to the recovery of 36 packets of narcotics, while a pistol with a magazine and nine rounds were recovered from one of the slain intruders," the BSF officer said. In addition, Rs 9,820 in Pakistani currency, a knife and a Pak-made cough syrup were also seized from the slain intruders, he said.

Lauding his troops for the success, Boora said over the past one year, not a single attempt from Pakistan had gone unnoticed and



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every single attempt was successfully foiled by the border guards. "It is a big achievement for the BSF... We have been getting specific inputs about possible attempts of narcotic smuggling over the past 10 days," he said, adding the BSF remains on high alert and never lowers its guard. "We had four incidents of narcotic smuggling this year and all the attempts were successfully thwarted. At least three people were needed to carry such a load," he said.

The IG BSF said his men are ready to face any challenge and are maintaining tight vigil all along

the International Border to foil any attempt from across the border. Asked whether the slain smugglers were also affiliated with any terrorist organisation, he said it is a matter of investigation.

"The operation is on and so is the investigation. We will share further detail when we reach some conclusion," he said. Earlier, Deputy Inspector General of BSF S P S Sandhu said the narcotic smuggling attempt was foiled around 2.30 am, leading to the recovery of 36 packets -- each packet weighing one kg and most likely containing heroin. The recovery was worth over Rs 180 crore in the international market, an official said.

Sandhu, who is also public relations officers of BSF, Jammu frontier, said the intruders were trying to smuggle the narcotics through the border fencing with a plastic pipe.

"This huge narcotic seizure on International Border has once again exposed the evil designs of Pakistani smugglers and made a big dent on their nefarious activities," he said, adding a total of 79 kg of heroin has been seized in the past one year with four intruders also apprehended.

Active Covid cases decline to 12,25,011

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: India added 1,07,474 new coronavirus cases, taking the total tally of COVID-19 infections to 4,21,88,138, while the active cases further declined to 12,25,011, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Sunday.

The death toll climbed to 5,01,979 with 865 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated. The active cases comprise 2.90 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 95.91 per cent, the ministry said.

A reduction of 1,06,637 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 7.42 per cent while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 10.20 per cent, according to the ministry. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,04,61,148, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 169.46 crore. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40

The death toll climbed to 5,01,979 with 865 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated

lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23 last year.

The 865 new fatalities include 444 from Kerala and 68 from Maharashtra. A total of 5,01,979 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,43,008 from Maharashtra, 57,740 from Kerala, 39,300 from Karnataka, 37,733 from Tamil Nadu, 25,969 from Delhi, 23,303 from Uttar Pradesh and 20,789 from West Bengal.

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. "Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

UP PF SCAM

CBI seeks sanction to probe Union power secretary

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 6: The Union power secretary Alok Kumar and agriculture secretary Sanjay Agarwal may soon be repatriated to their cadre state Uttar Pradesh where the CBI has sought sanction to investigate them in a Rs 2,268 crore PF scam, as per media reports.

Reports said that the order for their repatriation may come "any time" as the Union government does not want to face the embarrassment of having its top officers investigated for corruption. The government, therefore, wants to shift the action to the state.

The CBI has sought the sanction to probe the two officers in a case relating to illegally investing the provident fund of Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd (UPPCL) employees in a private company Dewan Housing Finance Ltd (DHFL), which was later accused of siphoning off Rs 31,000 crore of bank loans through a web of shell companies, as per the reports.

The UPPCL invested a total of Rs 4,122 crore in short-term fixed deposit schemes of DHFL, out of which Rs 1,854 crore was received on maturation of FDs, but Rs 2,268 crore is still not recovered.

New technique to make seawater potable

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, have developed a cost-effective and environment-friendly water desalination technique to make seawater potable by removing over 99 per cent of salt ions and other impurities with natural processing.

According to the team, this is the first such method that could controllably manipulate graphite, without damaging its structural integrity, inside aqueous solutions. The finding has been published in the international journal 'Nature Communications'. The research has been inspired by trees' natural intake of water using capillary effect, the team said, adding it can prove useful in designing filters for gas purification, proton exchange in a fuel cell, chemical separation, recovery of precious metal from waste among others.

PM to target Rahul, woo poll-bound states

In the second week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be seen in action, answering all Opposition parties, including Rahul Gandhi, in the Lok Sabha as well as in the Rajya Sabha



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reply to the allegations of Rahul Gandhi and MPs of other opposition parties in both the Houses of the Parliament in the second week of the Budget Session.

The Parliament is holding debate in both the Houses on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address and during this, former President of Congress, Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and many MPs of opposition parties have criticised the Modi government fiercely on the floor of the House.

Rahul Gandhi Wednesday (February 2) had attacked the Modi government, accusing it of finishing employment opportunities

in the country, eliminating small and medium industries, increasing the inequality gap between the poor and the rich, posing serious threat to national security due to wrong policies on China and Pakistan.

He also raised serious questions over the economic, industrial, strategic, foreign, internal and external security policies of the government. Rahul had also led a scathing attack on the Prime Minister regarding federalism and constitutional institutions. Attacking the government, Rahul Gandhi had said that the UPA government had pulled 27 crore people out of poverty during its 10-year rule and the NDA government pushed 23 crore people back into poverty.

In the Rajya Sabha too, MPs of all opposition parties including Congress, Trinamool Congress, NCP, RJD had fiercely targeted the policies of the Modi government in the first week of the budget session.

In the second week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be seen in action, answering all opposition parties, including Rahul Gandhi, in the Lok Sabha as well as in the Rajya Sabha.

Man lynched in UP after hitting cyclist

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhadoli (UP), Feb 6: A 30-year-old man was allegedly lynched in Uttar Pradesh's Bhadoli after he lost control of the vehicle he was driving and hit a cyclist.

Munshi Gautam, a Dalit, was driving a tractor in an inebriated state when he lost control of the ve-

hicle after going over a speed breaker and hit the cyclist in Berwa Paharpur village. As he tried to flee, he was caught by the local people and beaten to death.

Superintendent of Police Anil Kumar said: "As people tried to catch him, he accelerated in a bid to escape but hit a tree and fell on the road. The crowd caught hold

of him and physically assaulted him. Later, he was taken to the community health centre where doctors declared him brought dead."

A case has been registered against one Jai Shankar Pandey and three unknown people, the officer said, adding that Pandey has been arrested.

POLL FEVER



AAP leader Bhagwant Mann during a roadshow for the Assembly polls in Mohali

PTI PHOTO



Poll for next President!

When Amit Shah said UP poll results will have an impact

on national politics, no eyebrows were raised. The statement was largely ignored as one of the election rhetoric. But those who know Amit Shah closely say he is not known for mincing words and plays with a straight bat. Therefore, when he says something in the public domain, his words need to be understood from a political perspective. After all, the Prime Minister finally deputed him to take charge of the poll campaign in UP after a long lull and deliver 300/403 seats to the NDA. These seats are vital for the Presidential polls

slated to take place in July this year. The realignment of political forces depends on the outcome of the UP polls.

Centre on backfoot

The Centre may be forced to swallow a bitter pill and may not rush to amend the IAS service rules on deputation as the majority of the non-NDA governments have strongly opposed the proposal. While nine states have opposed the Centre's 'arbitrary' policy of forcing IAS officers to come on deputation to the Centre from

states, four other states— Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Meghalaya and Bihar—are inclined to go with the Centre. The last three states had opposed it and later agreed to reconsider it.

Amarinder loses sheen

Former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh has come in poor light during a series of media interactions in the recent past. While lambasting his successor Charanjit Singh Channi for his alleged involvement in the sand scam, a reporter asked him why he did not take action against him

when he was CM, Amarinder admitted his mistake. He took the blame on himself for not acting against Channi then but failed to explain why. Instead, he went on to disclose that he brought the matter to the notice of Sonia Gandhi. But he did not reveal what her reaction was. He stopped at that. Then came the classic case of Channi's alleged 'MeToo moment' in which Amarinder revealed that a bureaucratic couple came to him in the dead of night and complained. When Amarinder summoned Channi in this regard, the latter profoundly apologized. Amarinder pardoned him instead

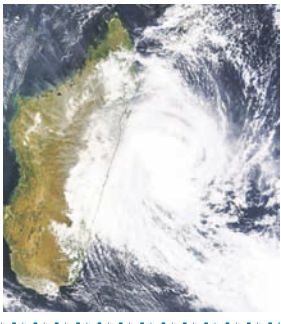
of lodging a police complaint or holding an inquiry. Here too, Amarinder disclosed that he brought the matter to the notice of Sonia Gandhi. This was a serious issue but it did not show Captain as a true leader who hushed up one case after the other. Then came the Sidhu moment and he disclosed that the recommendation to make him a minister came to him from Pakistan. He obviously created a flutter for a moment but failed to disclose who conveyed to him the message of the Pakistan PM. The Congress did not react and Sidhu poked fun.

# international



Despite some of the basic services now in place, the situation of t children in Syria prison is incredibly precarious  
BO VIKTOR NYLUND | UNICEF'S SYRIA REPRESENTATIVE

**CYCLONE HITS MADAGASCAR**  
Cyclone Batsirai's torrential winds and rain are hammering Madagascar, after landing on the island's east coast late Saturday. An estimated 45,000 people have been displaced by the tropical storm, the National Office for Risk and Disaster Management said Sunday



## of the day quote

The Germans are right now missing in action. They are doing far less than they need to do  
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL | US SENATOR

Kids are walking into a system that has been massively weakened  
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL | US SENATOR

The priority for me on the Ukrainian question is dialogue with Russia and de-escalation  
EMMANUEL MACRON | FRENCH PRESIDENT

## West Africa grapples with new wave of military coups

Governance & rule of law institutions are weak in many countries in the region, says Corinne Dufka, West Africa director for Human Rights Watch

**Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Feb 6:** It's a pattern becoming all too common again in West Africa: Mutinous soldiers detain a president, then seize control of the state broadcaster to announce they've taken over the country. International condemnation quickly follows, but the junta remains in power. West Africa's new wave of coups kicked off in Mali in 2020, followed by another in Guinea the following year, and then Burkina Faso late last month. Just a week later, gunmen also tried to overthrow the president of Guinea-Bissau in a machine-gun attack that lasted hours but failed.



Military power grabs are nothing new in the region: There have been nearly 100 in West Africa since 1946 but they'd dropped off over the past decade. Now the regional body known as ECOWAS is grappling with how to bring about a return to democracy in three of its 15 member states, where juntas have seized power in the last 18 months. "It looks increasingly hard to argue against the idea of coup contagion - that coups in one place inspire them in another - following the chain of events in

the past year," said Eric Humphery-Smith, Africa Analyst at Verisk Maplecroft. The new spike in power grabs comes as the Sahel, the vast region south of the Sahara Desert, faces growing violence from Islamic extremists, which in turn has caused people to turn against elected governments in both Mali and Burkina Faso. Neighboring Niger, hard-hit by Islamic insurgents, has also been vulnerable: Security forces stopped a coup attempt there last year. "Coups in West Africa have been making a

comeback for various reasons which bleed into one another," said Rukmini Sanyal, research analyst for the Middle East and Africa at the Economist Intelligence Unit. After last week's coup in Burkina Faso, people across the country lauded the military takeover, saying it was overdue. In Mali, thousands of protesters took to the streets in support of the ruling military after the West African regional bloc, ECOWAS, imposed sanctions over delayed elections.

## MOROCCO BOY FOUND DEAD AT BOTTOM OF WELL



**Ighrane, Morocco, Feb 6:** Morocco was in shock Sunday after emergency crews found a five-year-old boy dead at the bottom of a well in a tragic end to a painstaking five-day rescue operation that gripped the nation and the world.

The ordeal of "little Rayan" since he fell down the well Tuesday afternoon gained global attention and sparked an outpouring of sympathy online, with the Arabic hashtag #SaveRayan trending.

Throughout the operation to extricate him from the bottom of the 32-metre (100-foot) well shaft, authorities had cautioned that they did not know whether he was alive.

And reflecting the emotions provoked by the drama, it was Morocco's royal cabinet that announced he had been found dead.

"Following the tragic accident which cost the life of the child Rayan Oram, His Majesty King Mohammed VI called the parents of the boy who died after falling down the well," a statement from the royal court said.

By mid-afternoon Saturday, rescue crews, using bulldozers and front-end loaders, had excavated the surrounding red earth down to the level where the boy was trapped, and drill teams began creating a horizontal tunnel to reach him from the side. But progress slowed to a snail's pace as the drill teams worked by hand to avoid any vibrations that might bring the brittle soil down on the stricken child, local authorities said. The family was yet to announce the date of the funeral, but according to Muslim tradition it must take place soon, in principle as early as Sunday.

## UN experts: NK seeks to produce material for nukes

**United Nations, Feb 6:** North Korea has continued to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes including its capability to produce nuclear device components in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, UN experts said in a new report.

The panel of experts said in the executive summary of the report obtained Saturday night by The Associated Press that there was "a marked acceleration" of Pyongyang's testing and demonstration of new short-range and possibly medium-range missiles through January, "incorporating both ballistic and guidance technologies and using both solid and liquid propellants".

"New technologies tested included a possible hypersonic guiding warhead and a maneuverable re-entry vehicle," the panel said. North Korea also demonstrated "increased capabilities for rapid deployment, wide mobility (including at sea), and improved resilience of its missile forces."

The experts said North Korea "continued to seek material, technology and know-how for these programmes overseas, including through cyber means and joint scientific research".

A year ago, the panel said North Korea had modernised its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by flaunting United Nations sanctions, using cyberattacks to help finance its programmes and continuing to seek material and

**North Korea also continues to evade maritime sanctions by deliberately obfuscated financial and ownership networks**  
PANEL OF UN EXPERTS

technology overseas for its arsenal including in Iran.

"Cyberattacks, particularly on cryptocurrency assets, remain an important revenue source" for Kim Jong Un's government, the experts monitoring the implementation of sanctions against the North said in the new report.

In recent months, North Korea has launched a variety of weapons systems and threatened to lift the four-year moratorium on more serious weapons tests such as nuclear explosions and ICBM launches.

January saw a record nine missile launches, and other weapons it recently tested include a developmental hypersonic missile and a submarine-launched missile.

The Security Council initially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and made them tougher in response to further nuclear tests and the country's increasingly sophisticated nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

The panel of experts said North Korea's blockade aimed at preventing Covid-19 resulted in "historically low levels" of people and goods entering and leaving the country.

## CHILLING OUT



Children play in the snow after a winter storm in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico  
REUTERS

## SHORT TAKES

### 2 Indians held for possession of drugs

**Kathmandu:** Two Indians were among four persons arrested for possession of banned chemical drugs in Nepal Sunday. The Indians were identified as Mohamad Sultan, 25, and Pawan Kumar Das, 27, officials said, adding the arrests were made in separate incidents. Pawan Kumar Das, a resident of Motihari in Bihar, was on his way to Kathmandu from Rajbiraj Municipality when he was arrested in Saptari district, they said. Banned drugs - 100 ampules of diazepam, 100 ampules of Morphine and 100 ampule of Phenergan - were seized from him.

### Thousands protest vaccine mandates

**Toronto/Ottawa:** Thousands of people demonstrated in Canadian cities, including the financial hub Toronto, Saturday as mostly peaceful but noisy protests against vaccine mandates spread from Ottawa, the capital. The "Freedom Convoy" began as a movement against a Canadian vaccine requirement for cross-border truckers, but has turned into a rallying point against public health measures and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government.

### Lankan FM to meet Jaishankar

**Colombo / New Delhi:** Sri Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris is slated embark on a three-day visit to India Sunday during which he will meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, a bilateral meeting between Peiris and Jaishankar will take place at the Hyderabad House here on Monday evening. Earlier in the day, the Sri Lankan Minister will meet Shringla at the ITC Maurya.

### China issues alert for blizzard

**Beijing:** China's meteorological authorities Sunday issued an alert for heavy snow, mostly in regions in central part of the country. From Sunday afternoon to Monday afternoon, snowstorms are likely to hit parts of Hubei and Anhui, with 1-6 cm of snowfall expected, said the National Meteorological Centre. In some areas, snowstorms are expected to drop 10 cm of snow, Xinhua news agency quoted the centre as saying.

### Measles outbreak kills 74 kids in Af

**Kabul:** At least 74 children died following an outbreak of measles in Afghanistan's northern province of Badakhshan, an official said Sunday. Most of the children who lost their lives were living in areas without the access of public health workers and local mobile vaccinators.



## US airborne infantry troops in Poland

SOME 4,000 US TROOPS HAVE BEEN STATIONED IN POLAND SINCE 2017 ON A ROTATING BASIS

AGENCIES

**Warsaw, Feb 6:** Elite US troops and equipment landed Sunday in south-eastern Poland near the border with Ukraine on President Joe Biden's orders to deploy 1,700 soldiers there amid fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Hundreds more infantry troops of the 82nd Airborne Division are still expected to arrive at the Rzeszow-Jasionka airport. A US Army Boeing C-17 Globemaster plane brought a few dozen troops and vehicles. Their commander is Maj. Gen Christopher Donahue, who August 30 was the last American soldier to leave Afghanistan.

"Our national contribution here in Poland shows our solidarity with all of our allies here in Europe and, obviously during this period of uncertainty we know that we are stronger together," Donahue said at the airport. Biden ordered additional US troops deployed to



US Army officers after arrival at the Rzeszow-Jasionka airport in southeastern Poland  
AP PHOTO

Poland, Romania and Germany to demonstrate to both allies and foes America's commitment to NATO's eastern flank amid rising tensions between Russia and Ukraine. NATO's eastern member Poland borders both Russia and Ukraine. Romania borders Ukraine. The division can rapidly deploy within 18 hours and conduct parachute assaults to secure key objectives. Earlier in the week, US planes

## Sunak admits attending lockdown party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Feb 6:** UK's Indian-origin Chancellor Rishi Sunak has admitted to attending Prime Minister Boris Johnson's lockdown birthday party in 2020 but refused to say what happened when he entered the room and claimed that he was there for a meeting to discuss the Covid-19 situation.

His comments came after Johnson's five aides, including longstanding policy chief Munira Mirza, chief of staff Dan Rosenfield, principal private secretary Martin Reynolds and communications director Jack Doyle, resigned from their posts within hours of each other Thursday.

They stepped down after a damning investigation revealed that multiple parties took place at Downing Street while the rest of the United Kingdom was living under strict Covid-19 lockdown rules.

Sunak, who lives next door to the Prime Minister in Downing Street, is also reported to have attended a

surprise birthday party for Johnson in No. 10's Cabinet Room in June 2020. He admitted to attending Johnson's lockdown birthday party in 2020 but refused to say what happened when he entered the room, the Mirror newspaper reported.

The Chancellor said that he was in the Cabinet Room for Johnson's lockdown birthday party but insisted he was there for a meeting to discuss the Covid-19 situation. He acknowledged that the scandal surrounding parties during lockdown at Downing Street has damaged the public's trust in the government, the BBC reported.

The Chancellor, however, said that he believed his plans to deal with the cost of living crisis would help restore it.

Dismissing talk of him replacing Johnson, the Chancellor said that the Prime Minister had always told the truth about the parties. "Yes, of course he does. He is the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom," he said in a statement.



Asked whether the parties held in violation of Covid-19 lockdown rules damaged the public's confidence in the government, Sunak said: "Yes, I think it has. I can appreciate people's frustration. And I think it's now the job of all of us in government, all politicians, to restore people's trust".

As an embattled Johnson faces intense pressure to step down from the opposition and Conservative MPs, some Tory MPs believe that Sunak, as one of the most powerful figures in the government, is the frontrunner to replace Johnson.

The Chancellor said that he was in the Cabinet Room for the lockdown birthday party but insisted he was there for a meeting to discuss the Covid situation

Sunak, however, said that he believed his plans to deal with the cost of living crisis would help restore it

He insisted that Johnson, who is facing growing calls for his resignation, has his "full support"

## Xi & Imran vow to promote CPEC projects in Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, Feb 6:** China Sunday pledged closer cooperation with Pakistan under the \$60 billion CPEC investment programme and called for resolving the Kashmir issue properly and peacefully while opposing any "unilateral actions" that could complicate the situation as Prime Minister Imran Khan held talks with the top Chinese leadership, including President Xi Jinping.

Khan called on President Xi on the last day of his four-day visit to China to discuss a host of issues including the slow pace of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and increasing concerns of Beijing over recurring attacks on Chinese personnel working in its various projects in Pakistan.

In his meeting with Khan, Xi said China firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, dignity and fighting terrorism, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. He said



China is willing to join hands with Pakistan to push forward the in-depth development of the CPEC and ensure the implementation of key projects.

"Both sides reiterated that a peaceful and prosperous South Asia is in the common interest of all parties," said a joint statement issued at the end of Khan's visit to China to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics. In the past, India strongly rejected references made to Jammu and Kashmir in a previous joint statement by Pakistan and China and asserted that the union territory as well as Ladakh have been and will remain its integral and inalienable part.

# business

## of the day quote

The hope is that because of the heavy capital expenditure programme by the end of this financial year, hopefully, private capital investments will begin to come in a big way. That is our hope

TV SOMANATHAN | FINANCE SECRETARY

We will increase the pace of highways construction. Existing ones will be made into bigger ones, stronger ones; and new ones to reach these economic nodes. So, together, it will be 25,000 km

GIRDHAR ARAMANE | SECRETARY, UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

A technical committee, with experts, is being formed which will recommend suitable norms for USOF R&D scheme...For financing the R&D efforts, the kind of products that will be supported

K RAJARAMAN | SECRETARY, DOT



The Centre will bring for discussion in the next meeting of the GST Council the issue of bringing aviation turbine fuel (ATF) into the goods and services tax regime

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

## RBI LIKELY TO MAINTAIN STATUS QUO

Keeping inflationary concerns in mind, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to maintain status quo on key policy rates in its next bi-monthly economic policy. Experts, however, are of the opinion that RBI's monetary policy committee (MPC) may change the policy stance from 'accommodative' to 'neutral' and tinker with the reverse-repo rate as part of the liquidity normalisation process



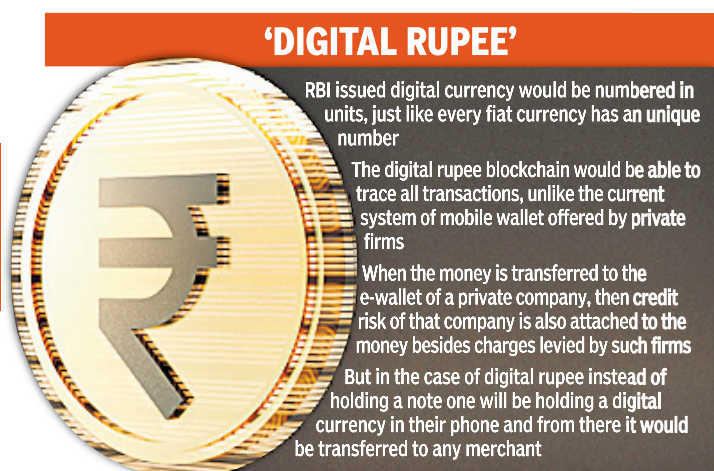
# Digital currency rollout by early '23

Central Bank Digital Currency is a digital or virtual currency but it is not comparable to the private virtual currencies or cryptocurrency that have mushroomed over the last decade. Private virtual currencies do not represent any person's debt or liabilities as there is no issuer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: India's very own official digital currency is likely to debut by early 2023, which will mirror any of the currently available private company-operated electronic wallets, but with a change that it will be a sovereign-backed facility, a top government source said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech last week talked about launching a central bank-backed 'digital



rupee' soon.

A top government source, who wished not to be identified said, the digital currency issued by the RBI would be numbered in units, just like every fiat currency has a unique number.

"The units issued in digital rupee would be included in the currency in circulation. It would not be very different from fiat currency. It would be more like an electronic form of fiat currency, so in a sense it would be a government-mandated electronic wal-

let," the source said.

The RBI has indicated that the digital rupee would be ready by the end of next financial year, the source added.

Explaining further, the source said that using electronic wallet offered by private companies, people currently transfer money to the private company who holds the money on his/her behalf and pays to a merchant when there is any transaction.

"In the case of a digital rupee instead of holding a note you will

## SHORT TAKES

### FPIs net sellers at ₹6,834cr

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out as much as ₹6,834 crore from Indian markets in the first four trading sessions of February. As per depositories data, FPIs took out ₹3,627 crore from equities, ₹3,173 crore from debt segment and ₹34 crore from hybrid instruments. Previously, FPIs have been net sellers for fourth consecutive months. "FPIs have sharply increased the pace of selling after the US Fed announcement last week in which it indicated an end of the ultra-loose monetary policy regime," said Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Morningstar India. Besides, globally, the bond yields have surged in the recent times on expectation of a hike in interest rates by the US Fed, he added.

### Discoms' dues to gencos dip 5.1%

New Delhi: Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers dipped 5.1 per cent year-on-year to ₹1,15,972 crore in February 2022, as per latest data. Discoms owed a total of ₹1,22,226 crore to power generation firms in February 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI. On a sequential basis also, total dues in February 2022 declined from ₹1,16,834 crore in January 2022. In February 2022, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 45 days of grace period offered by generators, stood at ₹1,03,014 crore as against ₹99,394 crore in the same month a year ago. The overdue amount stood at ₹1,02,557 crore in January 2022.

### LIC ropes in 6 ind directors

New Delhi: Ahead of initial public offering (IPO), Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has last month appointed six independent directors on its board to meet regulatory norms of corporate governance. LIC appointed former financial services secretary Anjuly Chib Duggal, ex-Sebi member G Mahalingam, former SBI Life managing director Sanjeev Nautiyal, sources said. Besides, chartered accountant MP Vijay Kumar, Raj Kamal, and V S Parthasarathy are roped in as independent directors on LIC's board. With the appointment, the total number of independent directors goes up to 9 and all vacancies are filled. Fulfilling corporate governance norms is an important element for filing Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with the Sebi.

## SBI lines up 6 NPA accounts to recover dues of ₹406 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Country's largest lender SBI has lined up six non-performing assets (NPAs) for sale to asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) to recover dues of nearly Rs 406 crore.

The six NPA accounts put up for sale to the ARCs are - Patna Bakthiyarpur Tollway with outstanding of Rs 230.66 crore; Steelco Gujarat Ltd Rs 68.31 crore; GOL Offshore Ltd Rs 50.75 crore; Andhra Ferro Alloys Ltd Rs 26.73 crore; Guru Ashish Taxfab Rs 17.07 crore and Genix Automations Pvt Ltd Rs 12.23 crore.

"In terms of the bank's policy on sale of financial assets, in line with the regulatory guidelines, we place the following accounts for sale to ARCs/banks/NBFCs/FIs, on the terms and conditions indicated there against," SBI said in the sale notices for these assets.

## RECORD CREDIT

# ADB lends \$4.6bn loans in 2021

The ADB's India portfolio comprised 69 projects worth \$15.5 billion as of December 31, 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Sunday said it provided a record \$4.6 billion loans to India in 2021, including \$1.8 billion towards coronavirus response.

"The Asian Development Bank committed a record \$4.6 billion in sovereign lending to India in 2021 for 17 loans, including \$1.8 billion for the country's Covid-19 pandemic response," the multilateral funding agency said in a statement.

Of the Covid-19-related assistance, \$1.5 billion was towards vaccine procurement and \$300 million to strengthen primary health care in urban areas and the country's future pandemic preparedness.

The ADB's regular funding programme to India is made to support transport, urban development, finance, agriculture, and skills building.



The agency extended a \$2.2-billion support for 12 state projects, committed to its geographically balanced programming. The funding body said its strategic engagement with states will include knowledge support to navigate their emerging development challenges.

The ADB's project portfolio in 2021 reflected the Indian government's focus on transforming cities into economically vibrant and sustainable communities. Other projects fund rural connectivity improvement, agribusi-

The ADB's operations continue to support the Government of India's fight against Covid-19 and its other development priorities such as managing urbanisation, raising industrial competitiveness to create more jobs, improving connectivity and enhancing skills

TAKED KONISHI | DIRECTOR, ADB INDIA

ness network development, the establishment of a skills university to promote industry-aligned skills, and capacity building for project design, the ADB said.

In addition to sovereign loans, the ADB also committed \$274 million to private sector projects in 2021 for Covid-19 support, highways improvement, energy efficiency, affordable housing and increasing farmer incomes.

## Green bonds to be rupee-denominated with long tenure



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Asserting that the issuance of sovereign green bonds is part of the government's overall borrowing programme, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said the rupee-denominated papers will have long tenure to suit the requirement of green infrastructure projects.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget Speech announced that the government proposes to issue sovereign green bonds to mobilise resources for green infrastructure. "The proceeds will be deployed in public sector projects which help in reducing the carbon intensity of the economy," she said.

In a post-Budget interview, Seth said this is part of the overall borrowing for the next financial year. "At this point of time, we are looking at the domestic markets and rupee-denominated...The tenure would be normal like any G-secture. It would be medium to long term but not short term. Fund mobilised will be used in the infrastructure sector;

Seth said the RBI will come out with a framework, which will have details about projects or sectors that would qualify for funding under the sovereign green bonds

Besides, he said the guidelines will have details related to the monitoring of fund usage in green or less carbon-emitting areas and assurances for investors

which has a requirement of long term finances," Seth said.

"This is not a general-purpose borrowing. These are going to be purpose-oriented borrowing. We will come out with a framework in the coming months. It's not a one year instrument but there will be more need for such an investment, and more eagerness of the investors in the area in the coming years," he added.

During 2022-23, the government plans to borrow a record Rs 11.6 lakh crore from the market to meet its expenditure requirement to prop up the economy hit by the pandemic.

Seth, however, assured that the government will execute the market borrowing programme in the next financial year in a non-disruptive manner without crowding out the private sector.

## LIC offers highest RoE of 82%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 6: The IPO-bound national insurer Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is not only the world's largest when it comes to home-market share with over 64.1 per cent of the total gross written premium as of 2020 but also the one that offers the highest return on equity (RoE) at 82 per cent, apart from being the third largest in terms of life insurance premium, says a Crisil report.

While for LIC the market share has been steadily declining-down from 100 per cent in the pre-2000 era to 71.8 per cent in 2016 and further down to 64.1 per cent in 2020, for SBI



Life, which is the second largest in the country, the same was only 5 per cent in 2016 and 8 per cent in 2020, Crisil said in a report prepared in November 2021 which is not yet made publicly available. At 64.1 per cent or with a gross written premium of \$56.405 billion,

LIC's market share is unparalleled globally, with no other life insurer anywhere else enjoying such a high market share, says the report.

Market share elsewhere, the Chinese market is dominated by Ping An Insurance and China Life Insurance, with 21 per cent (GWP at \$74.13 billion) and 20 per cent (\$69.65 billion). The largest Japanese player Nippon Life's market share is only 16.2 per cent (\$39.84 billion).

The report attributes such high RoE to LIC's large agency network, asset management capabilities, leverage and operational efficiencies, which has helped it achieve consistent revenue growth and profitability.

## Audi weighing local production of EVs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: German luxury carmaker Audi is evaluating the feasibility of producing electric vehicles locally in India while it seeks to reach threshold volumes for such a step to be successful, according to a senior company official.

With the company deciding to go all-electric globally from 2033, it is a matter of time for local production of its electric cars, which has so far received a robust response in India.

"It's a continuous evaluation at this point in time...We are evaluating the acceptability of electric mobility in India," Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillion told PTI when asked about the company's plans with rival Mercedes-Benz announcing to locally assemble all-electric EQS sedan in India from this year.

In the last seven months, he said Audi India has launched five electric cars in India and will con-



tinued to sell these throughout these 12 months.

Audi's five electric cars in India are the e-tron 50, e-tron 55, e-tron Sportback 55, e-tron GT, RS e-tron GT. These have played a key role, along with its petrol powered Q-range and with A-sedans in the company recording a two-fold jump in retail sales at 3,293 units in India in 2021 as com-

pared to 1,639 units in 2020.

"So far, it has been extremely successful. This is one segment, which actually has performed even better than what we initially anticipated," Dhillion said.

However, as far as the local assembly is concerned, he said, "We are evaluating. We need to reach those threshold volumes before we

We have, as Audi India or Audi AG, already decided that by 2033 we will become an all-electric car company. So, it's a matter of when, not if that whether we will do it

BALBIR SINGH DHILLON | AUDI INDIA HEAD

can take a call that we start making these cars locally."

At the moment, he said Audi India's product portfolio in the EV segment is "strong enough to cater to the customer needs for next coming years and the network is strong enough to cater to what our requirements today are."

Audi's German counterpart Mercedes-Benz has announced that it would locally assemble its EQS electric sedan in India and would be launched in the market in the fourth quarter of 2022.

## EYE ON 5G

# Airtel sets in motion ambitious 5-yr plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel has plans to spend about Rs 1.17 lakh crore through business transactions with its subsidiaries like Indus Towers, Nxtra and Bharti Hexacom, according to a regulatory filing.

The company will hold an extraordinary general meeting of the members of the company February 26 to also seek their approval for issuing shares to Google for its about Rs 7,500 crore investment in the company to buy 1.28 per cent stake.

Bharti Airtel will invest up to Rs 17,000 crore on transactions with Indus Towers in the next 4 financial years and Rs 20,000 crore in 2025-26, the filing said Saturday.

"Given the 5G developments globally, it is likely that 5G will soon start to become a reality in India also, slowly in the key cities and then going into the rest of India across the length and breadth of our current network. Therefore, considering the increased requirements



₹88,000 crore in business with mobile tower company Indus Towers

₹15,000 crore for availing services of datacentre firm Nxtra

Transaction of up to ₹14,000 crore with Bharti Hexacom

of passive infrastructure during massive 5G rollouts, the Company proposing the higher amount of transactions of up to Rs 20,000 crore per annum with Indus Towers for FY 2025-26," the notice said.

## Hyundai cornered over Kashmir post

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 6: Hyundai Motor India Sunday said it stands strong on its ethos of respecting nationalism following a backlash in social media after a dealer of Hyundai in Pakistan posted a message supporting separatists in Kashmir.

A Twitter account of a Hyundai dealer in Pakistan with handle @hyundaiPakistanOfficial had posted a message supporting Kashmir Solidarity day, supporting what it called as "struggle for freedom". Following it, #BoycottHyundai trended on Twitter in India with many people asking to stop buying the company's products in the country.

Reacting to the developments, Hyundai Motors India put out a message on social media reiterating its commitment to the Indian market.

"Hyundai Motor India has been committed to the Indian market for more than 25 years now and we stand firmly for our strong ethos of respecting nationalism," it said.

The company further said, "The unsolicited social media post linking Hyundai Motor India is offending our unparalleled commitment and service to this great country."

Reiterating that India is second home to the Hyundai brand, the company said, "We have a zero-tolerance policy towards insensitive communication and we strongly condemn any such view."

Hyundai Motor India further said, "As part of our commitment to India, we will continue our efforts towards the betterment of the country as well as its citizens." Hyundai Motor India is the second-largest carmaker in the country after Maruti Suzuki India. It currently sells 12 models including Creta and Venue in the domestic market.

# HIGH FIVE

# Rohit, spinners lift India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 6: Skipper Rohit Sharma brought in a sense of calm with a sizzling 60 (51b, 10x4, 1x6) after India's new spin combination of Yuzvendra Chahal (4/49) and Washington Sundar (3/30) laid the platform for an easy six-wicket victory over West Indies in the first ODI which also happens to be country's 1000th.

First the hosts bundled out West Indies for a meagre 176 in 43.5 overs as spinners Chahal and Sundar ran through their listless line-up and then skipper helped the hosts chase down the target in just 28 overs.

It is the 10th time in last 16 games that West Indies have failed to bat full 50 overs despite presence of senior players like Darren Bravo, Kieron Pollard, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Nicholas Pooran to name a few.

After a brief middle-order wobble, Suryakumar Yadav (34 n o) and debutant Deepak Hooda (26 n o) added 62 runs without much pressure to take the team home.

Just like the skipper, India also missed batter Rohit in South Africa in equal measure and on his comeback, there were no signs of any hamstring niggle as he added 84 with stand-in opener Ishan Kishan (28).

Virat Kohli (8) also started with two boundaries but was holed out in the deep while Rishabh Pant

was unfortunately run-out at the non-striker's end. But Rohit was in his element, while young Kishan, played second fiddle to perfection.

Earlier, Chahal and Sundar wreaked havoc on slow track as the West Indies batters made a bee-line to the pavilion, save Jason Holder (57, 71b, 4x6) and Fabian Allen (29), whose 78-run stand for the eighth-wicket helped the team go past the 160-run mark.

Put into bat, West Indies lost opener Shai Hope (8) cheaply after he was castled by Mohammed Siraj (1/26) in the third over as the visitors lost their first wicket for 13.

Brandon King (13) started with a boundary, and then was joined by one-down Darren Bravo (18), as the two tried to resurrect the innings, but could only add 31 runs for the second wicket. Sundar pegged back the visitors by removing King and Bravo in the 12th over as the visitors slipped to 45/3.

Then it was Chahal, who took two wickets in two successive deliveries in the 20th over as he removed both hard-hitting batters - Pooran (18), whom he trapped in the front. This was Chahal's 100th ODI wicket.

Off the next ball, he cleaned up Kieron Pollard (0) with his googly that knocked the rival skipper's off-stump. West Indies were in a spot of bother as they lost half the side for just 71. Chahal was on

## TRIBUTE TO LATA

**AHMEDABAD:** The members of the Rohit Sharma-led Indian cricket team wore black armbands in the first ODI against the West Indies here, to pay respect to the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, who died on Sunday morning in a Mumbai hospital. "The Indian Cricket Team is wearing black armbands today to pay their respects to Bharat Ratna Smt Lata Mangeshkar ji, who left for her heavenly abode Sunday morning. The queen of melody, Lata didi loved cricket, and always supported the game and backed Team India," the BCCI tweeted. The Indian team also observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect for the departed singer. A Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) official said that the India flag will be flown at half-mast at the stadium and there will be no celebrations held by the state cricket body.

a rampage as he then removed Shamshad Brooks (12) as West Indies was teetering at 78/6. However, Holder and Allen tried to take the game deep before they were eventually bundled out in 43.5 overs.

## BRIEF SCORES

West Indies 176 (Jason Holder 57; Yuzvendra Chahal 4/49, Washington Sundar 3/30) lost to India 178/4 (Rohit Sharma 60, Suryakumar Yadav 34 n o; Alzarri Joseph 2/45) by 6 wickets.



**INDIA WIN RECORD-EXTENDING FIFTH U-19 WORLD CUP TITLE BEATING ENGLAND BY 4 WICKETS IN THE FINAL COURTESY BAWA'S ALL-ROUND SHOW INCLUDING A 5-WICKET HAUL, RAVI'S 4-WICKET HAUL AS WELL AS NISHANT AND RASHEED'S HALF CENTURIES**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**North Sound (Antigua), Feb 6:** An utterly dominant India won a record-extending fifth U-19 World Cup title here Saturday, beating England by four wickets in the final of an extraordinary campaign that was almost derailed by a COVID-19 outbreak.

The triumph bore resemblance to the exploits of world-class Indian U-19 teams of the past. Intrepid and industrious in their approach, the starry-eyed Indian players' success stories also gave a glimpse into the world's most perfectly calibrated youth structure, which is capable of consistently producing world-class cricketers who are ever ready to take on the biggest of challenges.

In a reflection of India's dominance, wicketkeeper Dinesh Bana finished the chase of 190 with two sixes and 14 balls to spare.

On winning the toss in the big final, England captain Tom Prest rightly chose to bat first to avoid the 'scoreboard pressure' during the chase. India did the next best thing: bowl out the opposition for a total -189 in this case, in 44.5 overs - that failed to put them under pressure.

India were all over England before a gritty knock by James Rew (95, 116b, 12x4) saved his team the blushes. 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 the opposition low with two early blows.

India kept taking wickets at regular intervals but not for once did the intensity of the team dropped. For close to 19 overs, Rew and James Sales (34 n o) defied India with their 93-run eight-wicket stand, ensuring the 1998 edition winners recover from a horror 61/6 and then 91/7.

In response, India lost Angkrish Raghuvanshi without a run on the board but the extremely talented Shaik Rasheed shone with a composed 50 (84b, 6x4).

Coming off his magnificent century in the semifinal against Australia, skipper Yash Dhull fell for 17, but the duo of Nishant Sindhu (50 n o, 54b, 5x4, 1x6) and

## 2022 EDITION IN NUMBERS

**506** Runs scored by Dewald Brevis (South Africa) in U-19 World Cup 2022, most in the tournament; Angkrish Raghuvanshi (278) was the top scorer for India

**162\*** Raj Bawa's knock against Uganda U-19, Highest individual score in an innings in the tournament

**2** Centuries scored by Ariful Islam (Bangladesh; 4 innings), Brevis (6 innings) and Haseebullah Khan (Pakistan; 6 innings) most in the tournament; Bawa, Yash Dhull and Raghuvanshi have one century each for India

**3** Half centuries by Brevis and Brian John Bennett (Zimbabwe), most in the tournament; Shaik Rasheed has two half centuries for India

**17** Wickets taken by Dunith Wellalage (Sri Lanka), most in the tournament; Vicky Ostwal (12 wickets) is the highest wicket-taker for India

**405/5** India's total against Uganda, highest in the tournament

**50** Papua New Guinea's total against Pakistan, lowest in the tournament

## INDIA IN U-19 WORLD CUP FINALS

YEAR	OPPOSITION	RESULT	MARGIN
2000	Sri Lanka	Champions	6 wickets
2006	Pakistan	Runners-up	38 runs
2008	South Africa	Champions	12 runs (D/L method)
2012	Australia	Champions	6 wickets
2016	West Indies	Runners-up	5 wickets
2018	Australia	Champions	8 wickets
2020	Bangladesh	Runners-up	3 wickets (D/L method)
2022	England	Champions	4 wickets

**6/24** Bowling figures of Jamie Cairns (Scotland) against Uganda, best in the tournament; Ostwal's 5/28 against South Africa is the best among Indians

**2** Five-wicket hauls for Wellalage, most in the tournament; Ostwal and Bawa (5/31) have one each

**591** Highest match aggregate score in the tournament coming in the match between Bangladesh (293/8) and South Africa (298/8)

## CAPTAINS' TAKES

**Yash Dhull (India U-19):** Proud moment for India, that we managed to achieve this. It was difficult at the start to get the combination right. But as time went we became a family and the team atmosphere was good. Great moment to be playing under this lot of support staff

**Tom Prest (England U-19):** Choosing to bat first, we'd have liked a better start, but the way James Rew then batted to get his 95, deserved a hundred. We got to a score where we thought we were in the game with and gave it a crack. We've got a strong bowling attack and taking a wicket in the first over got the mood up and got the confidence going. They (India) obviously batted really well. They had a couple of great partnerships, so credit to them

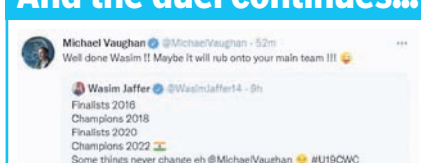
## OTHER REACTIONS

**VVS Laxman:** It's important but this is just a learning process and just the start of their journey. Everyone in this group understands that. This is about development as players and as a person and it's great to see how they've developed and evolved over the last couple of months

**Sourav Ganguly:** Congratulations to the under-19 team and the support staff and the selectors for winning the world cup in such a magnificent way. The cash prize announced by us of 40 lakhs is a small token of appreciation but their efforts are beyond value. Magnificent stuff

**Hrithikesh Kanihtkar:** It's too exciting for my good, but happy with the result. I think we learned a lot from this. (Dhull) led them very well. He has a very good head on his shoulders. I think it's a fabulous competition, getting this stage to perform at this young age, for all teams. It's a great opportunity to showcase talent and for the academies around the world

## And the duel continues...



Parampara - Pratishta - Anushasan

Bawa (35) took the team within striking distance of victory with a 67-run partnership for the fifth wicket.

It has been an extremely challenging ride for the Indian team in this edition of the tournament as multiple players from the side were infected by the coronavirus and at one stage even struggled to field

eleven fit personnel.

However, despite the huge setback that almost derailed their campaign, India came back a stronger unit focussed on correctly doing the things that were within its control.

Their clinical on-field performance told a very different story, a story far removed from all the trou-

bles that the team went through off it, when as many as seven players were infected with the virus.

## BRIEF SCORES

England U-19 189 (James Rew 95, James Sales 34 n o; Raj Bawa 5/31, Ravi Kumar 4/34) lost to India U-19 195/6 (Nishant Sindhu 50 n o, Shaik Rasheed 50, Raj Bawa 35; Joshua Boyden 2/24) by 4 wickets.

# Tough outings for West Ham, Chelsea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Feb 6:** When the FA Cup fourth-round game entered stoppage time, West Ham was facing a humiliating loss to sixth-tier side Kidderminster.

Alex Penny had scored in the 19th minute for the National North division's third-place team which was outplaying the millionaires from London who are only point away from the Champions League places in the Premier League.

Only Declan Rice's equalizer forced the game into extra time to prevent West Ham from being on the receiving end of the biggest upset in the 150 years of world soccer's oldest competition.

Then to avoid a penalty shootout, it took Jarrod Bowen scoring in stoppage time of extra time to re-

cover a 2-1 victory against the team 113 places lower in the English league system.

## CHELSEA SCARE

It was a struggle too in London for European champion Chelsea, needing to come from behind to eliminate third-tier Plymouth 2-1 in extra time at Stamford Bridge to reach the fifth round.

Macaulay Gillesphey headed Plymouth into an early lead and Cesar Azpilicueta leveled via a fine backheel finish just before half-time. But Chelsea couldn't find a winner inside 90 minutes. Even after Marcos Alonso scored at the end of the first half of extra time, Plymouth still had a chance to level.

But goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga guessed correctly to save a late penalty from Ryan Hardie after the Plymouth striker had

been fouled by Malang Sarr.

## CITY RALLIES

Manchester City was stunned by Fabio Carvalho putting Fulham ahead after four minutes but the Premier League champions quickly leveled through Ilkay Gundogan and went on to eliminate the second-tier side. City goalkeeper Zack Steffen avoided conceding again. John Stones headed City ahead before a double from Riyad Mahrez, the first from a penalty, to seal a 4-1 win.

## KANE'S DOUBLE

Harry Kane scored twice - either side of Solly March's first-half own-goal - in Tottenham's 3-1 win over Brighton. Tottenham manager Antonio Conte was able to deploy new signings Dejan Kulusevski and Rodrigo Bentancur in the second half.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Aditi finishes T-15

**FORT MYERS (US):** India's Aditi Ashok produced a sensational career-best nine-under 63 in the third and final round as she shot from the outline to finish T-15 at the LPGA Drive On Championship. Needing just 23 putts to go through the round, Aditi holed nine birdies and had no bogeys. There was a point, when most of the leaders had not even begun as Aditi rose up the leader board to as high as Tied-third, but finished T-15 as the others came into play. After a T-13 in her previous start, Aditi is showing solid form and could well break through this season for her maiden title on the LPGA. Ireland's Leona Maguire (67) gave her mother a birthday present a day early by becoming the first woman golfer from her country to win on the LPGA Tour. Finishing in solo second was 11-time LPGA Tour winner Lexi Thompson.

### OFC take on SCEB

**VASCO:** A comeback that should revitalise the dropping shoulders, SC East Bengal (SCEB) would look to continue their fight and bag a win when they take on Odisha FC in their ISL match here Monday. The red and golds conceded two early goals against Chennaiyin FC in their last engagement, but showed grit to come back for a draw. The result helped them move to 10th spot in the table with 10 points from 15 games. For Odisha, they have not won a game in the last three matches and coach Kino Garcia will hope they get back to winning ways to keep their semifinal hopes alive. Odisha are seated eighth at the table with 18 points from 14 outings. The last two fixtures between these two teams are the two highest-scoring fixtures -- 6-5 and 6-4 (Odisha won both) -- in ISL history.

### Bopanna-Ramkumar pair wins Tata Open

**PUNE:** India's Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan won their second ATP World Tour title together after pipping the top seeded Australian pair of Luke Saville and John-Patrick Smith in the final of the Tata Open Maharashtra, here Sunday. The Indians erased the first set deficit to win 6-7(10-12), 6-3, 10-6 in one hour and 44 minutes. Bopanna and Ramkumar combined as a team on the ATP Tour for the first time at the Adelaide event last month in the run-up to the Australian Open and won the trophy. For Bopanna, it was his 21st ATP doubles title while for Ramkumar it was second trophy at this level and it will push him inside doubles top-100 for the first time in his career. They split USD 16370 as prize money and earned 250 ranking points each.



# When Nightingale of India rescued BCCI post '83 win



Lata Mangeshkar with 1983 World Cup winning team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 6:** When Kapil Dev lifted the World Cup at the Lord's balcony, the erstwhile BCCI president and one of the powerful ministers in the Indira Gandhi cabinet, late NKP Salve had a different worry.

It was still some years to go for economic liberalization and an astute businessman like Jagmohan Dalmiya's foresight to turn cricket into an industry.

Kapil's Devils needed to be celebrated but the BCCI, which currently is looking at USD 5 billion television contract, barely paid its cricketers a daily allowance of 20 pounds.

Salve had to turn to his 'Man Friday' and Indian cricket's 'one stop Encyclopedia' Raj Singh Dungarpur for a solution to be able to reward the players for such an achievement.

'Raj bhai', as Dungarpur was known in Indian cricket circle, decided that the only way was to re-



Sachin Tendulkar gifts Lata an autographed jersey in 2014

quest his close friend and one of country's biggest cricket fans Lata Mangeshkar to do a pro-bono concert in the national capital's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.

The IG was packed to capacity as 'Lataji' did a near two hour programme. The event ensured that BCCI collected enough money and each of the 14 members got ₹1 lakh each as cash award.

"It was a very decent sum in those days. We would otherwise save up our money and daily allowance for that month and it came to barely ₹60,000," Sunil Valson recollected while speaking to this agency.

"I remember some people said we will give you ₹5000, some said ₹10,000

## Lata's fasting tale from 2011 World Cup

**NEW DELHI:** Legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar's love for cricket is no secret and she had her own superstitions like any fan such as fasting for the Indian team's victory during the high voltage World Cup semifinal clash against arch rivals Pakistan in 2011. She did not eat or drink during the nine-hour nail-biter at Mohali which India won by 29 runs to make it to the final. "I had watched the whole match and I was very tense," Mangeshkar had told PTI in an interview at that time. "Everyone in my family follows some kind of superstition when India is playing. I, Meena and Usha did not eat or drink anything during the match. I was constantly praying for victory and we had our dinner after India won," she had said. An avid cricket fan, Mangeshkar had watched the 1983 World Cup final, which India won, from the gallery at the Lord's. Mangeshkar was fond of Sachin Tendulkar and treated him like her son. Tendulkar too used to call her aai (mother). "Sachin treats me like his mother and I always pray for him like a mother. I can never forget the day when he called me 'aai' (mother) for the first time. I had never imagined that. It was pleasant surprise for me and I feel blessed to have a son like him," she had said. According to Tendulkar, Mangeshkar's songs are a stress buster for him.

and it was very disrespectful at times. But then Lata ji sang in that concert. What a function it was and one of the most memorable evenings to watch her sing live," Valson said.

The BCCI and more so Dungarpur never forgot how 'Lata ji' saved Indian cricket from sheer embarrassment just because of her pristine love for the 'Gentleman's game'.

As a mark of respect, the BCCI till her death kept two complimentary VIP tickets allocated at any Indian stadium for her, where India played an international match.

The Mangeshkars were really cricket fans but one of the finest chroniclers of Mumbai cricket, senior journalist Makarand Waingankar recalls the days in 60s when Lata was a regular visitor at

the CCI Stadium and later at the Wankhede Stadium in 70s and 80s. Mangeshkar would sit alongside Dungarpur and former Mumbai legend and Test opener Madhav Apte and watch the proceedings.

She was very close to all Mumbai cricketers like Sunil Gavaskar, Dilip Vengsarkar and Sachin Tendulkar, who spoke about her with unmatched humility and mother like respect.

She would often drop in at the Cricket Club of India and enjoy cricketing discussion in the company of Dungarpur and another distinguished Test cricketer Hanumant Singh, who was the former's nephew.

Tendulkar would often say that she saw 'Maa Saraswati' in Mangeshkar. It's so poignant that the 'Nightingale of India' left a day after Saraswati Puja.