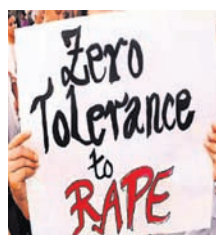




### VITAL TIPS

Actor Deepika Padukone says communication is the key to a good, healthy and successful relationship

LEISURE P2



### OVER 2,400 WOMEN RAPED

2,439 women were raped and 90 killed in the name of 'family honour' during last six months in the Punjab province of Pakistan

INTERNATIONAL P10



### SECOND ODI TODAY

All eyes on KL Rahul's batting position as India look to seal series when they take the field for 2nd ODI against WI

SPORTS P12

**ADMISSIONS OPEN**

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VI - XI (Residential)

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### Religious places in City to reopen Feb 12

**Bhubaneswar:** In view of the declining number of fresh Covid-19 cases, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday decided to reopen religious institutions of all types from February 12 subject to strict adherence of Covid guidelines. BMC's guidelines released Tuesday said all temples situated in Bhubaneswar can reopen from February 12 but with strict observance of Covid safety protocols. Devotees fully vaccinated (if eligible for vaccination) will be allowed inside the temple premises. For the purpose of ascertaining the fact of full vaccination, either the hard copy of the certificate or soft copy available in mobile/tablet may be relied upon. Devotees shall be required to bring their photo ID cards for identification. **P3**

### Praveen Kumar of 'Mahabharat' fame dies

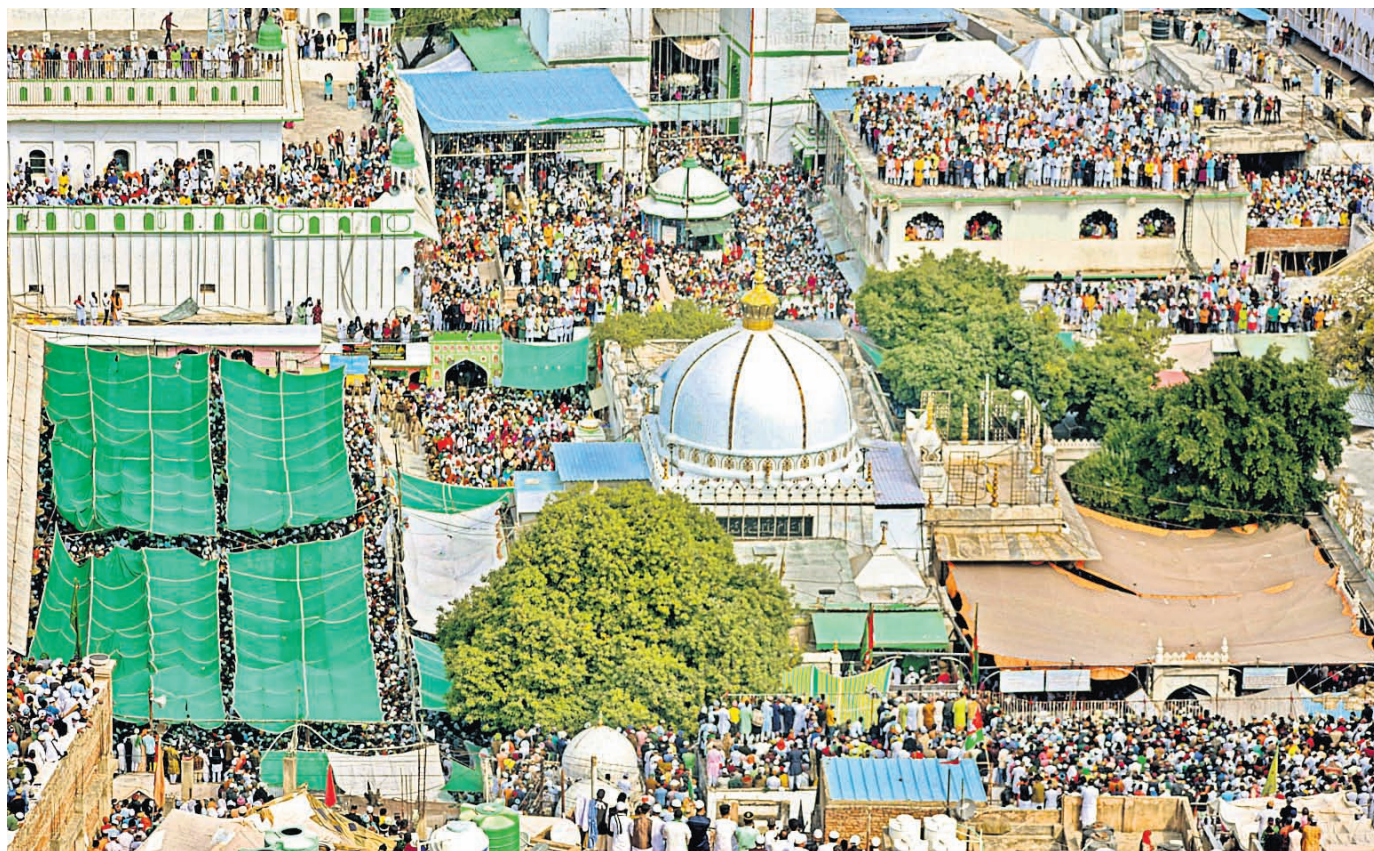


**New Delhi:** Actor-athlete Praveen Kumar Sobti, best known for playing Bheem in the TV series "Mahabharat" and for winning an Asian Games gold medal, died following a cardiac arrest late Monday evening. He was 74. The actor breathed his last at his Ashok Vihar residence here. "He had a chronic chest infection problem. At night, when he started feeling uneasy, we called the doctor at home. He passed away between 10-10.30 pm following a cardiac arrest," a relative of Praveen told PTI. Sobti was 20 when he joined the BSF. He represented the country across various athletic events in hammer and discus throw and even won four medals at the Asian Games, including two gold medals.

**The Leaders' Choice**

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## SYMBOL OF UNITY



Devotees gather to celebrate the Urs festival at Dargah Ajmer Sharif of Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

## SEC enhances spend limit of candidates

**Candidates for corporator and mayor posts in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur can spend up to ₹2L and ₹12L, respectively**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** Ahead of urban elections, the State Election Commission (SEC) has enhanced the expenditure limit for candidates contesting for the posts of councillor, corporator, chairperson and mayor in the urban local bodies (ULBs). "In exercise of the powers conferred under the Odisha Municipal Act, 1950 and Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, 2003 and having consulted the state government, the SEC hereby revises as follows the limit on expenditure that may be incurred by a candidate either by himself or through any person authorised by him for election as councillor/corporator/chairperson/mayor to an NAC/municipality/ municipal corporation," the commission said in an order. As per the order of the SEC, now candidates contesting for the posts of corporator and mayor in three municipal corporation towns—Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur can spend up to Rs2 lakh and ₹12lakh, respectively. Similarly the expenditure limits for candidates contesting for councillor and chairperson in municipalities having a population above 1 lakh is set at Rs1lakh and Rs5lakh, respectively. For the municipality having a population between 50,000 and 1 lakh, the expenditure limits are ₹75,000 and Rs3 lakh for candidates fighting for councillor and chairperson posts respectively. Besides, the candidates contesting for councillor and chairperson in NACs or municipalities having a population of up to 50,000 can now spend upto ₹50,000 and ₹2 lakh, respectively.

URBAN POLLS

### Pvt pre-schools to reopen Feb 14

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** The Odisha government Tuesday allowed reopening of private pre-schools (play & KG) for the academic session 2021-22 from February 14. The government instructed the private pre-school managements in state to follow Covid appropriate behaviour strictly.

The decision came soon after the state government's direction to reopen schools for Classes VIII to XII February 7 and for Classes I to VII February 14.

The government formally instructed that the teaching, non-teaching and support staff must have been fully vaccinated by the time of reopening. The school managements should be impressed upon to take utmost care of the kids.

After remaining shut for almost a month in the wake of the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, educational institutions across the state reopened Monday with strict adherence to Covid protocols. All schools for students of Class VIII and above, colleges, ITIs, polytechnics, professional institutions and universities resumed physical classes. Hostels in colleges and universities reopened a day before.

The class timing of Class IX to XII under the state school and mass education department is 10am to 4pm, while it is 9am to 1pm for Class I to VIII students whose classes will resume from Feb.14. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also urged parents and guardians to send their wards to schools while following Covid-19 protocols. Addressing the students, teachers and parents, Naveen said, "Today is a historic day for all of us. After a gap of about two years, the school bells rang in the state. The children went to schools today."

## All 7 soldiers stuck in avalanche dead

**The bodies of the seven soldiers, who went missing after their patrol along the Indo-China border in Arunachal's West Kameng district was hit by an avalanche, have been found**

AGENCIES



**New Delhi, Feb 8:** The bodies of the seven soldiers, who went missing after their patrol along the Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district was hit by an avalanche, have been found, the Indian Army said Tuesday.

"Bodies of all seven individuals have been recovered from the avalanche site. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of everyone involved, all seven have been confirmed deceased," it said.

The seven army personnel, part of a patrol, were struck by an avalanche in the high altitude area of Kameng Sector in Arunachal Pradesh February 6. The area, located at an altitude of 14,500 feet, had been witnessing inclement weather with heavy snowfall over last few days.

"The bodies of the soldiers are currently being transferred from the avalanche site to the nearest Army medical facility for further formalities," the Army said. The area has been witnessing inclement weather with heavy snowfall over last few days, the force said.

Arunachal Pradesh is generally divided into Kameng area on the west and Rest of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Army's Eastern Command handles the 1,346-km-long Line of Actual Control including Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. This command has three corps - 33 Corps (Sikkim), 4 Corps (Kameng sector) and 3 Corps (Rest of Arunachal Pradesh) to handle the LAC.

## HIJAB ROW ESCALATES

**Karna CM orders closure of schools and colleges for 3 days; HC posts the matter for hearing to Wednesday**

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, Feb 8:** The hijab-row protests in Karnataka spread across the state Tuesday, with campuses witnessing 'conflict-like' situations marked by stone-pelting incidents, use of force by police and the Muslim girls standing their ground for wearing the headscarves, prompting calls for peace and calm both by the government and the High Court, which is now looking into the students' plea for their right to their hijab.

As the issue snowballed into a major controversy, the government declared three days holidays for educational institutions across the state, even as voices across the country came in for and against the hijab issue. Protests erupted at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College in Udupi after a large group of students wearing saffron stoles and headgears raised slogans in the college campus as hijab clad Muslim girls were staging a protest demanding justice.



Students wearing saffron shawl block a road during protest over the hijab controversy in Shimoga, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

In Mandya, visuals of a group of boys heckling a hijab-clad girl went viral, even as support came pouring in for her on social media. Tension prevailed at some educational institutions in Udupi, Shivamogga and Bagalkote.

Stone pelting incident was reported near a college in Bagalkote's Rabbavi Banhatti and a few students even tried to barge into the campus, whom police dispersed using mild force. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC have been clamped in Shivamogga city for two days Tuesday. Some students even tried to hoist the saffron flag at the college premises in Shivamogga. Similar protests have been reported from Mandya, Vijayapura, Gadag, Dakshina Kannada, Davangere and Chitradurga, among other districts.

Chief Minister Bommai said: "I appeal to all the students, teachers and management of schools and colleges as well as people of Karnataka to maintain peace and harmony." "I have ordered the closure of all high schools and colleges for the next three days. All concerned are requested to cooperate," Bommai, who is in New Delhi said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka High Court appealed to the students and people to maintain peace and tranquility and said only some mischievous people were keeping the issue burning. After hearing the petitions filed by some students studying in a Government Pre-University College for Girls in Udupi, the matter was posted for Wednesday.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Strange! Your school is not allowing you to wear hijab and mine doesn't want me to wear skirt!!

## Hyundai apologises for Kashmir tweet by Pak partner

**Piyush Goyal says the govt has asked Hyundai Motors to be more forceful in its unequivocal apology**

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** South Korea's Hyundai Motor Tuesday expressed regret for an "unauthorised" tweet by its Pakistani partner on Kashmir and has got the offending post deleted, but not before it faced calls for a boycott of its cars and the Indian government curtly telling it to be more forceful in its unequivocal apology.

As tweets from accounts linked to Hyundai and its affiliate Kia Corp expressing solidarity with separate Kashmir kicked a row Sunday, the South Korean firm on

that day responded saying it has "zero-tolerance policy towards insensitive communication and we strongly condemn any such view".

But, as the furor refused to die down and the government stepped in, Hyundai Tuesday issued a statement saying "deeply regretting any offence caused to the people of India by this unofficial social media activity".

Hyundai Motor Company, it said, "does not comment on political or religious issues in any specific region". "Therefore, it is clearly against Hyundai Motor's policy that the independently-owned distributor in Pakistan made unauthorised Kashmir-related social media posts from their own accounts," it said, adding it has ensured that the offensive tweets are deleted.



The issue figured in the Rajya Sabha where Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the government has asked Hyundai Motors to be more forceful in its unequivocal apology. "This issue has been taken up both with the government there

and the company concerned," Goyal said. "They (Hyundai) have already issued a clarification yesterday. We have also asked them to be more forceful in their unequivocal apology on this issue." A Twitter account of a Hyundai dealer in Pakistan with handle

@hyundaiPakistanOfficial had posted a message supporting Kashmir Solidarity Day, backing what it called as "struggle for freedom".

#BoycottHyundai were among the top trends on Twitter in India Monday, as tweeteratis called for dumping the second-largest car-maker in the country for Tata Motors. Stressing that Hyundai Motor Company has been investing in India for many decades and "remains strongly committed to Indian customers", the company in the statement said, "We deeply regret any offence caused to the people of India by this unofficial social media activity". The company further said once the situation was brought to its attention, it made the distributor acutely aware of the "inappropriateness of the action".

### 3-day spli poll leave to government staff

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** The state government Tuesday granted special casual leave of three days to all government employees during the three-tier panchayat election 2022.

In a letter, Ashok KK Meena, principal secretary of panchayati raj and drinking water department, said the election to the panchayati raj institutions will be held on different dates (February 16, 18, 20, 22 and 24) in a phased manner.

All government employees and employees of government undertakings/ boards/ corporations/ apex bodies, who have registered themselves as voters in grama panchayats may exercise their franchise for the PRI election.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	57808.58 ↑ 187.39
NIFTY	17266.75 ↑ 53.15
DOLLAR	74.74 ↑ ₹0.05
EURO	85.25 ↓ ₹0.13
GOLD	₹48,360 ↑ ₹132
SILVER	₹62,231 ↑ ₹196

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.6°C	30.5°C
TEMP MIN	15.5°C	15.6°C
Humidity	85%	89%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather most likely	

# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
The stars urge you to focus on your finances and savings, and today, you might remain very busy doing just that. But take care, says Ganesh, you don't want a sulking spouse when you go home. Don't cancel any plans; go ahead and enjoy that new film.

**TAURUS**  
Your unflinching punctuality, your insistence on following time schedules is due to be noticed and appreciated today. Your colleagues and superiors will be singing praises as soon as you arrive for work. If you are in an artistic or a creative profession, such as designing, journalism, multi media, you have a remarkably eventful and gratifying day ahead.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you may resume your quest for spirituality which you had aborted some time back. However, that doesn't mean you are on your way to sainthood. You are just trying to get close to your inner self. Though you will be frugal while spending on yourself, your lavish treatment to your beloved will stump everyone, including him/her, predicts Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You are likely to be a little over-zealous and over-analytical today, foretells Ganesh. You should not be too forceful or severe on others. This will help you save a few friendships and will make sure that your reputation remains intact.

**LEO**  
Agreed that home is where the heart is. But today, your home is where your troubles will be. The faster you try to run away from them, the quicker they seem to catch up with you, says Ganesh. So, scooting off may not be the best solution. Some people around you may try to blow things out of proportion; the best way to keep them in check is with a smile.

**VIRGO**  
Confidently take on the challenges that in all likelihood will test your business abilities, especially the ones that are related to your investments and monetary matters. You will most probably come up with novel ideas to solve long-pending issues, and Ganesh says that this will be very effective.

**LIBRA**  
There is a very strong possibility of major improvements in your public standing and image today. But it all depends so much upon your personal character, and, therefore, you must guard it zealously, even with your own life. Those who seek to malign or dent your reputation will be disappointed, says Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
Today, there may come up situations which may test your patience, predicts Ganesh. However, it would be wise to sit and sort out all the differences with your colleagues or family members or your partner.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The cloud of worries is likely to keep you gloomy today. Try to burst that cloud, and take a decision that would help you to solve your troubles. There may be some delay, if you want the situation to get back to normal. However, as Ganesh says, you would be the one who would benefit at the end of the day!

**CAPRICORN**  
You'll kick start the day in high spirit which will take everyone by surprise. You will shift gears at work so that you can perform more efficiently and productively. Such a change will boost your confidence as you will see the positive results for yourself.

**AQUARIUS**  
Are you facing a roadblock in your path? Make a minor change in your route, you will find a smooth and clear road once again, advises Ganesh. The efforts you have made in the past will come to fruition, today. Don't get satisfied with your current achievements, you still have a long way to keep working hard.

**PISCES**  
Do not commit yourself to any large investments today. It is best to avoid speculative activities. For those who have a job, the co-operation of your colleagues will help you progress, says Ganesh.



## ELTON JOHN'S OSCAR PARTY SET TO RETURN AS IN-PERSON EVENT

After going virtual last year due to the pandemic, the annual Oscar viewing party hosted by legendary rockstar Elton John and his husband David Furnish, is set to return as an in-person event March 27, reports *Variety*.

## GRAHAM KING TO PRODUCE MICHAEL JACKSON BIOPIC

Graham King, the producer of *Bohemian Rhapsody*, is all set to bankroll another biopic, this time around late pop legend Michael Jackson. Lionsgate will look after the distribution of the film, reports *Variety*.



## Deepika shares key to healthy relationship

**New Delhi:** As her film *Gehraiyaan* is all set to release just days before Valentine's Day, top star Deepika Padukone, has shared the key to a good and healthy relationship.

In a recent interview about what it takes to make a relationship healthy and successful, Deepika said: "Communication."

She added: "I think honest communication in a relationship is extremely important and it's not necessary that two people in a relationship are always on the same page. They may not necessarily have to agree with each other on all points but I think to communicate the way you feel about certain things and to be honest about that."

Deepika and Ranveer have set the benchmark of what love is with their constant romance-filled ex-

changes on social media. Asked what it feels like to be in love, the *Om Shanti Om* actress shared: "For me love is trust, friendship, companionship, love is where you can just be yourself, love is adjustment. I think when you are 19 or 21, the definition of love is very different and when you get older the definition changes." "So, it's like the character has been layered from the start so the minute you introduced to the character you realise that she is already at quite a juncture in her life in a sense so I think the hardest part was obviously was the conviction with the choices that are being made by this character and the repercussions of the choices," Deepika added. **IANS**

# The Power of the Dog tops Oscar noms

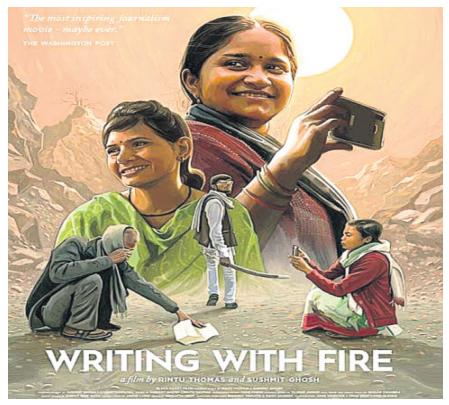
Indian documentary 'Writing With Fire' has been nominated in the Best Documentary Feature category

**New York:** Jane Campion's gothic western *The Power of the Dog* led nominations to the 94th Academy Awards, where streaming services more than ever before swept over Hollywood's top honors.

In nominations announced Tuesday, Campion's film landed a leading 12 nominations, including nods for best picture, best director and all of its top actors: Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst, Jesse Plemons and Kodi Smit-McPhee.

Denis Villeneuve's majestic sci-fi epic *Dune* followed closely behind with 10 nominations. The nominees for best actress are: Jessica Chastain, *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*; Olivia Colman, *The Lost Daughter*; Penelope Cruz, *Parallel Mothers*; Nicole Kidman, *Being the Ricardos*; Kristen Stewart, *Spencer*.

The nominees for best actor are: Will Smith, *King Richard*; Javier Bardem, *Being the Ricardos*; Benedict Cumberbatch, *The Power of the Dog*; Andrew Garfield, *Tick, Tick ... Boom!*; and Denzel Washington, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.



Nominees for best director are: Paul Thomas Anderson, *Licorice Pizza*; Kenneth Branagh, *Belfast*; Jane Campion, *The Power of the Dog*; Steven Spielberg, *West Side Story* and Ryūstūke Hamaguchi, *Drive My Car*. Significantly, Indian documentary *Writing With Fire* has been nominated in the Best Documentary Feature category. Directed by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh, both debutants, the film chronicles the rise of *Khabar Lahariya*, India's only newspaper run by Dalit women. **PTI**



## 'Mithun da's passion gives me goosebumps'

**Mumbai:** Actor Arjan Bajwa who reunites with veteran star Mithun Chakraborty in web series *Bestseller* says that the energy and the enthusiasm of the senior actor is truly inspiring.

Arjan, who earlier had worked with Mithun in Mani Ratnam directorial *Guru*, said: "One quality that I have noticed of his is humility. He is a superstar, a National Award-winning actor and we all know the great dancer that he was in his younger age. He has achieved everything that an actor wishes for...but on set, he is always on time and his passion is almost like a newcomer; as if it is his debut film. It just gives me goosebumps. I think there is a reason why these actors become icons and that is not just about their talent and



luck. It has a lot to do with their humility and remain the constant learner of their craft."

He went on adding, "Once we become successful we tend to think we know it all and nothing can go wrong in whatever we do. But when we look at an actor like Mithun da who is always ready to improvise in a scene and change things without hesitation and mingling with us, his co-star as if we are classmates, without keeping any distance of seniority it says a lot about him."

*Bestseller* is an adaptation of a book written by Ravi Subramanian, named *The Bestseller She Wrote*. Directed by Mukul Abhyankar, the show featuring Shruti Hassan, Gauahar Khan, Satyajeet Dubey among others releases on Prime Video February 18. **IANS**

## Bhubaneswar: Popular Odia film actress Bhoomika Dash, who was earlier seen playing bubbly characters, will don khaki uniform in her upcoming thriller *Mayavee*.

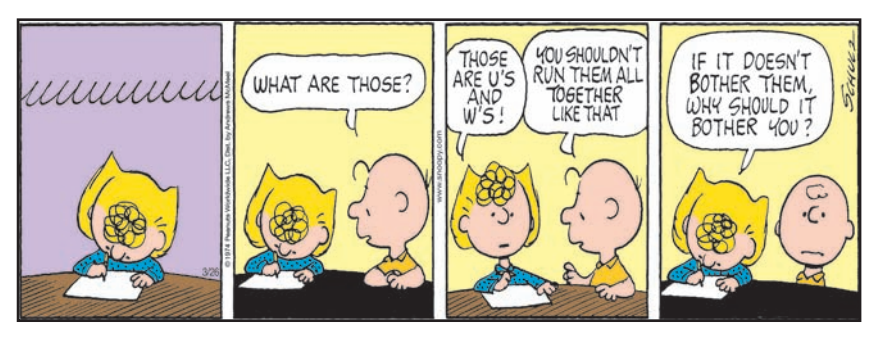
Talking about plot, she says, "For the first time in my career, I am essaying the role of a rough and tough cop in this crime and suspense thriller while Amlan plays a journalist. The movie revolves around a murder mystery and ends with a social message. That's all I can divulge at the moment. The shooting of the movie will begin from February 21. I hope the audience will like me in my new avatar."

Mahurat of the movie was held recently in front of Lions' Gate at Srimandir in Puri in the presence of cast and crew including producer Tapan Dash, director Sudhanshu Sahu. The mahurat clap was given by State School and Mass Education Minister Samir Das.

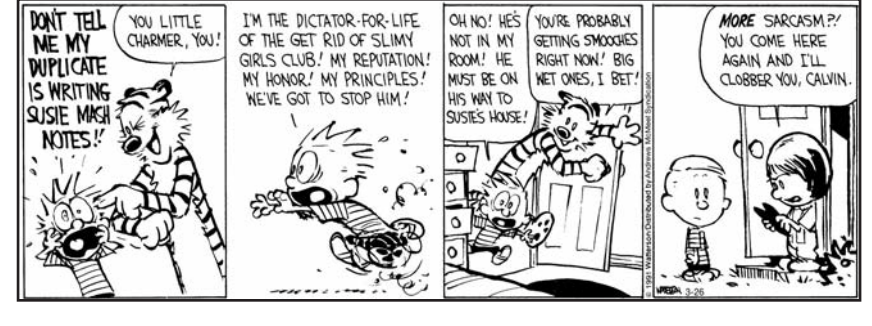
Produced under the banner of Aneesh Entertainment, the film also stars Alivia, Asutosh, Kunal, Chakradhar and Prashant. **PNN**



## PEANUTS



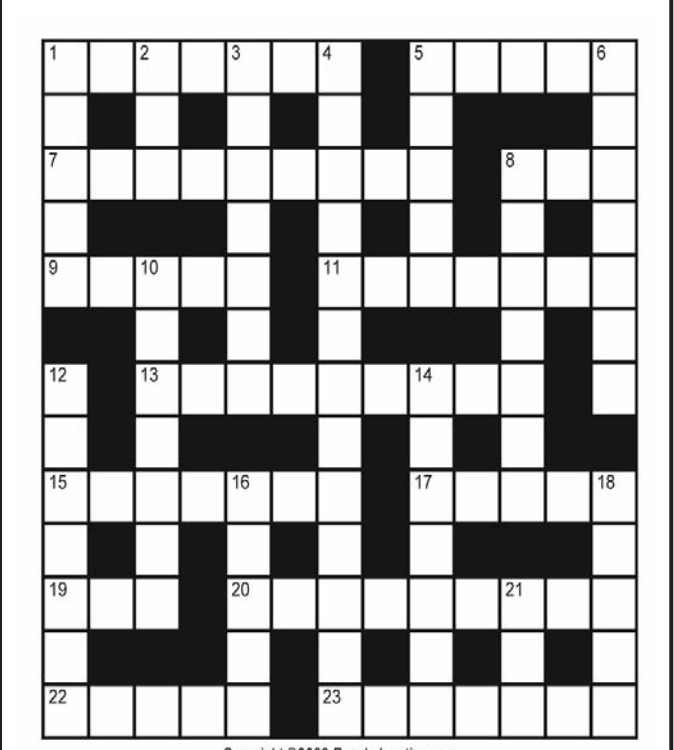
## CALVIN AND HOBBS



## BREVITY



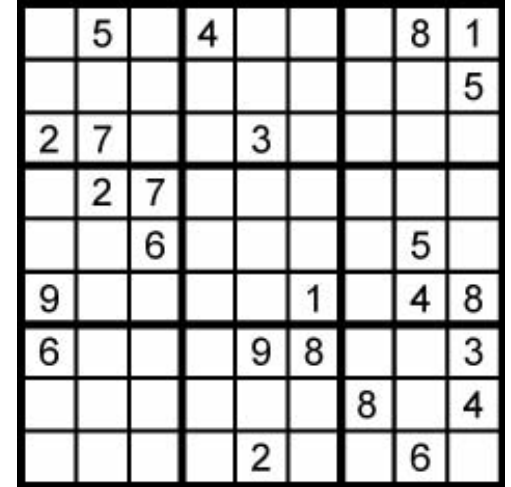
## FUN post CROSSWORD



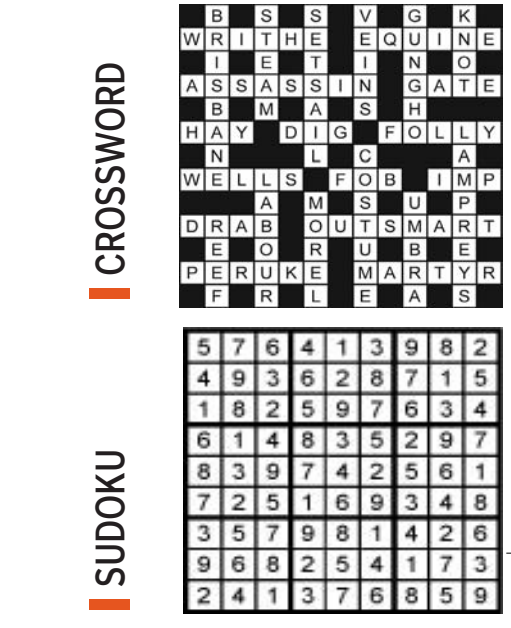
- Copyright ©2022 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Biting
  - 5 Home planet
  - 7 Curriculum
  - 8 Barley bristle
  - 9 Guessed wrong
  - 11 Battery type
  - 13 Pause indicator
  - 15 Sumptuous
  - 17 Island drum
  - 19 Herd of seals
- Down**
- 20 Reversal (5-4)
  - 21 Sufficient
  - 22 Pilotless plane
  - 23 Sea snake
  - 6 Public executioner
  - 8 Rhone River town
  - 10 Echo
  - 12 Bent over
  - 14 Seafood item
  - 16 Related maternally
  - 5 Wield, as influence
  - 18 Undisguised
  - 21 Logger's tool

## SUDOKU

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



## SOLUTIONS



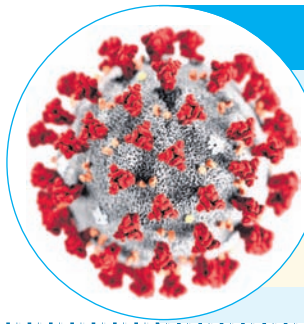
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



### MATTER OF FAITH

Hundreds of people congregate during a religious ceremony inside Barabati fort in Cuttack, Tuesday



### COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	39,91,12,784	31,88,76,429	57,71,982
India	4,23,39,611	4,08,40,658	5,04,062
Odisha	12,69,811	12,45,026	8,775

## Shrines in City to reopen Feb 12

The BMC guidelines shall be in force till February 28 and must be followed scrupulously by all concerned institutions and individuals alike, as directed by the civic body

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** In view of the declining number of fresh Covid-19 cases and overall improvement in the scenario, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday decided to reopen religious institutions of all types February 12 subject to strict adherence of Covid guidelines. BMC's guidelines said that all temples situated in Bhubaneswar can reopen from February 12 but with strict observance of Covid safety protocols. Only those devotees who are fully vaccinated (if eligible for vaccination) will be allowed inside the temple premises. For the purpose of ascertaining the fact of full vaccination, either the hard copy of the certificate or soft copy available in mobile/tablet etc may be relied upon. The guidelines further stated that devotees shall be required to bring their photo ID card namely Aadhaar or Voter ID or any other photo ID card for identification.



Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar

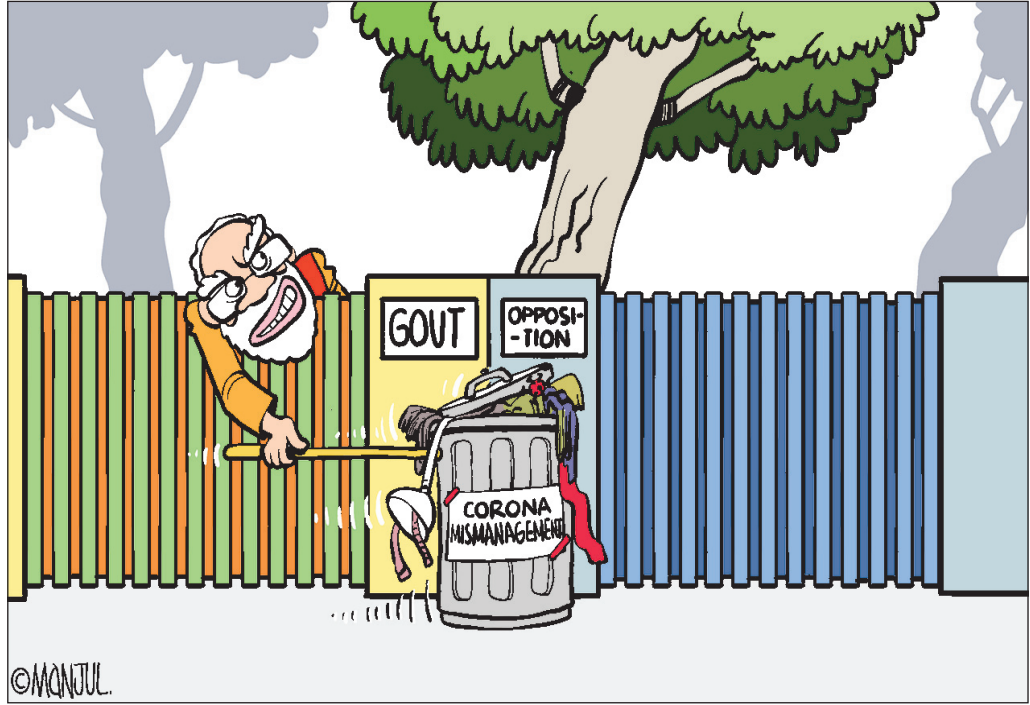
However, no devotee shall be allowed inside the sanctum sanctorum of the temples. Darshan will be allowed from a safe distance only. There shall be no offerings like Bhoga in the temples until further orders. Children below the age of 15 years shall be allowed inside the temples or religious institutions with proper proof of identification and only under the supervision of their parents or adult relatives. For Lingaraj Temple, the maximum of 100 devotees will be allowed at a time from Singhadwar to Ada-Katha. However, sanctum sanctorum entry must be completely prohibited. Similarly, all other religious institutions like Mosques, Churches and Gurudwaras will also be allowed to

open from February 12 for fully vaccinated devotees. The authorities and management of the religious institutions shall ensure that only that many devotees are allowed inside the premises of the religious institution in order to ensure social distancing of six feet between the devotees. Under no circumstances the social distancing norms should be violated. All religious institutions' management shall ensure that only the priests and servants, who are fully vaccinated, are allowed to perform rituals. They must put on masks at all times in coherence to the Covid protocol. All devotees must wear masks and maintain appropriate social distancing of six feet from each other at all times.

**V**alid ID proof, fully vaccinated certificate, face masks and other Covid appropriate measures have been mandated for devotees during their visit to religious places within City limits. For Lingaraj Temple, the maximum of 100 devotees will be allowed at a time from Singhadwar to Ada-Katha, while the sanctum sanctorum entry must be completely prohibited. All religious institutions' management shall ensure only the priests and servants, who are fully vaccinated, are allowed to perform rituals with face masks on and complete adherence to Covid protocols.

The religious institutions' authorities must make adequate provisions for hand washing, hand sanitising for the devotees at the entry and exit points. Chewing and spitting of pan and gutka must be strictly prohibited inside and outside the institution premises. The person with SARI/ILI like symptoms shall not be allowed inside. Persons belonging to other vulnerable groups such as persons with co-morbidities, old age individuals and pregnant women are advised not to visit religious institutions. The aforementioned BMC guidelines shall be in force till February 28 and must be followed scrupulously by all concerned institutions and individuals alike.

### POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Youth held for misbehaving with lady cop

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** The Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested a youth for misbehaving with women traffic personnel at the Xavier Square in the Capital city. The accused has been identified as Ashis Dugal, 24, a native of Kandhamal district. Dugal has been

staying at Acharya Vihar under Sahid Nagar police limits along with his family. Police officials claimed that Dugal reached the traffic post at Xavier Square and started misbehaving with the lady traffic constable deployed at the spot Monday afternoon. He engaged in a verbal argument when the lady objected his

unruly behavior. Dugal tried to flee when the locals rushed the spot. However, he failed due to a traffic jam at Xavier Square following the altercation. Later, the lady called the PCR van that took him to Chandrasekharpur police station. Dugal was Tuesday produced before the court that sent him to judicial custody.

## State lauded for reforms in coal & mining sector

Odisha government has been the front runner in implementing all reforms brought by the Union government in coal and mine sector, the PM said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday lauded Odisha government for implementing all reforms related to mining and coal sector. The Prime Minister, while speaking in the Rajya Sabha on the 'Motion of Thanks' to President's address, said there was a time when our natural resources were to fill lockers of some people only but now the natural resources of the country are strengthening the nation financially. "We brought several reforms in the coal and mine sector. We did auction of mines in a transparent manner. The revenue from auction was given to state governments," the Prime Minister said. Odisha gov-

ernment has been the front runner in implementing all reforms brought by the Union government in coal and mine sector, the PM said. "I congratulate the Odisha Chief Minister for the same," the Prime Minister said. Modi also attacked the Congress party, stating that the party's thinking is trapped by that of the "Urban Naxals." "It is being said that we are trying to change history. The Congress thinking seems to have been hijacked by urban Naxals. We just want to improve the memory of some people. We are not changing history. Some people's history is limited to one family," he said. Taking a dig at a statement on importance of federalism made by Rahul Gandhi in Lok Sabha last week where he dwelt on two competing visions of India — one that viewed India as a 'Union of States, Modi said, "Congress has a problem with 'nation' also. If [the word] nation is unconstitutional, then why is your party's name Indian National Congress. Change it into 'Federation of Congress'. Correct the mistakes done by your predecessors."

## BJD, BJP hit the streets ahead of rural polls

WHILE THE BJD ACTIVISTS STAGED A SIT-IN IN FRONT OF THE REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE FCI HERE DEMANDING LIFTING OF SURPLUS PARBOILED RICE FROM ODISHA, THE BJP WORKERS TRIED TO GHERAO THE CM'S RESIDENCE OVER TEACHER MAMITA MEHER MURDER CASE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and main Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Tuesday hit the streets against the Centre and the state government respectively ahead of the three-tier panchayat elections in Odisha. While the BJD activists staged a sit-in in front of the regional office of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) here demanding lifting of surplus parboiled rice from Odisha, the BJP workers tried to gherao the Chief Minister's residence over teacher Mamita Meher murder case in Kalahandi. The BJD leaders threatened to launch a statewide agitation if the Centre does not take steps to lift surplus parboiled rice at the earliest. BJD spokeswoman Shreemayee Mishra said, "Odisha is the third largest contributor of rice to the PDS in the country and around 95 per cent rice produced in the state is parboiled. As per the constitutional provisions, the Centre is supposed to lift the surplus rice. However, it is refusing to lift the surplus rice." During 2020-21 fiscal, Odisha produced 52 lakh tonnes of par-



BJD activists stage a demo at the FCI office while BJP workers tussle with police during their attempt to gherao the CM's residence in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



BJP workers tussle with police during their attempt to gherao the CM's residence in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

boiled rice and the FCI was supposed to lift 22 lakh tonnes of rice. But, the FCI has decided to lift only 2 lakh tonnes of raw rice and 5 lakh tonnes of parboiled rice from Odisha. This will cause much agony to the farmers and millers in Odisha, said the BJD leader. The refusal of the Central government to lift the surplus rice has affected the life and livelihood of the farmers. The BJP MPs, instead of fighting for the rights of the farmers of the state, are working against their interests, she alleged. Farmers of Kalahandi, Bolangir, Baragarh,

Sambalpur, Sonapur, Nuapada, Deogarh and Nabarangpur districts are badly affected by the apathetic attitude of the Central government, Mishra said. A BJD delegation submitted a memorandum in this regard to the FCI DGM Dillip Sethy. The FCI has huge stocks of parboiled rice for the next five years and it has no more space to stock the rice, Sethy said. The FCI procures vitamin plus parboiled rice and it had set a target to procure 5 lakh tonnes of vitamin-rich parboiled rice. The FCI would lift parboiled rice if it was added

with vitamin, added the FCI DGM. BJP state unit president Samir Mohanty, however, dubbed the BJD protest a drama to cover up the corruption and mismanagement in Mandi and its nexus with the mill owners. On the other hand, the BJP took out a rally to gherao the Chief Minister's residence seeking justice for teacher Mamita Meher. The party workers sought the resignation of Minister of State (MoS) for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra. Besides, they sought a CBI probe into the matter.

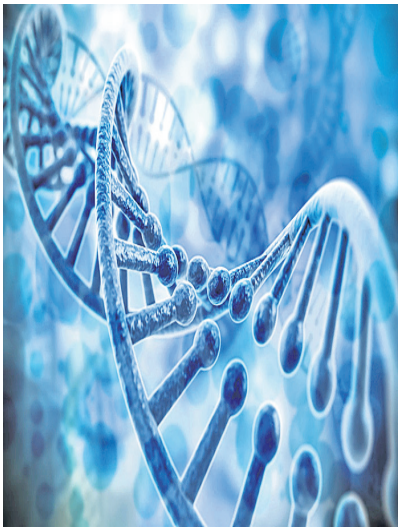
The workers of BJP Mahila Morcha blocked the road near Sishu Bhawan square in the city here. Some workers of the party tried to break the police barricade and march towards the Naveen Niwas, the residence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. "Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra, an accused in the murder case, is yet to be arrested. Chargesheet has not been filed against prime accused Gobinda Sahu. The Chief Minister has failed to give justice to the victim," said BJP leader Lekhasri Samantsinghar.

## More contagious new HIV variant doubles immune system decline rate

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Geneva, Feb 8:** The newly-detected HIV variant from the Netherlands is more transmissible and damaging, according to research. The study, led by researchers from the University of Oxford's Big Data Institute, showed that people living with the newly revealed subtype-B of HIV experience double the rate of immune system decline (CD4 count). They have higher viral loads (amount of virus in the blood) and are also vulnerable to developing AIDS two to three times faster after diagnosis than if they were living with other strains of the virus. The study also revealed that the variant has been circulating in the Netherlands for years and remains receptive to HIV treatment. While the newly identified variant does not represent a major public health threat, it "underscores the urgency of speeding up efforts to halt the HIV pandemic", the UNAIDS said in a statement. The HIV pandemic continues to take a life every minute and scientists have long worried about the evolution of new and more transmissible variants of HIV. "Ten million people living with HIV worldwide are not yet on treatment, fuelling the continued spread of the virus and potential for further variants," said Eamonn Murphy, UNAIDS Deputy Executive

- With an estimated 79 million people infected, HIV remains the deadliest pandemic of our time, with no vaccine or cure yet
- The treatment is only antiretroviral therapy, which keeps them alive and well and prevents transmission of the virus
- The Covid pandemic has affected the treatment, leading to the death of some 36 million people from AIDS-related illnesses since the start of the pandemic
- About 1.5 million people were newly infected with HIV in 2020, while of the 38 million people living with HIV today, 28 million are on life-saving antiretroviral therapy



Director, Programme, in the statement. Murphy also called for urgent "need to deploy cutting-edge medical innovations in ways that reach the communities most in need". "Whether it's HIV treatment or Covid-19 vaccines, inequalities in access are perpetuating pandemics in ways that harm us all," Murphy added. With an estimated 79 million people infected, HIV remains the deadliest pandemic of our time, the UNAIDS said. It still has no vaccine or cure. The treatment

is only antiretroviral therapy, which keeps them alive and well and prevents transmission of the virus. But the Covid pandemic has affected the treatment, leading to the death of some 36 million people from AIDS-related illnesses since the start of the pandemic. About 1.5 million people were newly infected with HIV in 2020. Of the 38 million people living with HIV today, 28 million are on life-saving antiretroviral therapy.

## BPIA helps AIIMS-Bhub get med equipment

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** The Biju Patnaik International Airport authority, as a part of the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), has funded for the procurement of medical equipment like six mechanical ventilators, two portable ventilators and two defibrillators to the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar.

The AIIMS authorities have completed procurement and installation of all these equipment and those have been inaugurated by BPIA Director Prabhat Ranjan Beuria in presence of AIIMS Bhubaneswar Medical Superintendent Sachidananda Mohanty and other employees. "The equipment will be helpful particularly for treatment during difficult days of Covid-19 pandemic," said

Mohanty and thanked the BPIA and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for its support to the society. After a brief interval, the AIIMS Bhubaneswar resumed the walk-in outpatient department (OPD) services from Monday as the Covid-19 cases started witnessing a considerable decline. In a notification, AIIMS Bhubaneswar had earlier announced its decision to restart its OPD services.

## Planetariums reopen

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** Pathani Samanta Planetarium in the city here and Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Planetarium at Sambalpur's Burla witnessed 185 and 61 visitors on Day-1 respectively as they reopened with adherence to Covid protocols Tuesday. Pathani Samanta Planetarium Deputy Director Subhendu Patnaik said planetariums will run with 50 per cent of seating capacity in every show. Wearing of masks for the entire period of visit is a must for the visitors, he added.

**Indian Bank**

इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD

**ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR**

2nd Floor, Shyam Arcade, Khetrajpur, Sambalpur-768003

**POSSESSION NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement (Security) Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer issued a Demand Notice calling upon the following borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) to repay the outstanding amount & interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

The borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors and the public in general that the Authorised Officer has taken **SYMBOLIC POSSESSION** of the property of below mentioned account in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said rules. The borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Indian Bank, Sambalpur Branch** for an amount mentioned herein below.

**The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.**

SAMBALPUR BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) & Mortgagor(s)	Description of the immovable property	Date of Demand Notice	Symbolic Possession Notice Date	Amount outstanding as on the date of Demand Notice
Borrower: M/s. Spicy Affairs, Prop.: Mr. Gurvind Singh Bedi, S/o- Jasbeer Singh Bedi, At: Farm Road, Near FCI Building, Khetrajpur, Sambalpur and Guarantor: Mr. Puspinder Singh Bedi, S/o- Avtar Singh Bedi, At: Farm Road, Khetrajpur, Sambalpur	All that piece and parcel of Land measuring an Area: Ac.0.070dec. or 3049.2 sqft. together with structure thereon at Plot No.: 449/2582, Khata No.: 257/19, Mouza: Sambalpur Town Unit No. 8 Badabazar, Tahasi/Dist.: Sambalpur, Bounded by: East: Road, Plot No. 230, West: Plot No. 235 (P), North: Plot No. 246, South: Plot No. 235 (P)	30.06.2021	04.02.2022	₹51,73,368.44 as on 29.06.2021 + interest, costs & expenses thereon

Date: 08.02.2022, Place: Sambalpur

Sd/- Authorised Officer, Indian Bank

# SPCBs told to file reports on e-waste recycling industries

# 5 more tainted officials shown the door

# CHSE: Upload Class XII quarter-end marks



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed all the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Pollution Control Committees to file status reports on operation of e-waste recycling industries causing environmental degradation and health hazards in their areas.

Asking the states to hold an online interaction in the issue and submit a consolidated report by the next hearing May 27, the NGT bench headed by Chairperson Adarsh Kumar Goel also directed the Central Pollution Control Board to particularly ascertain compliance status in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in light of earlier orders.

The bench was dealing with a grievance against the burning of e-waste in Sarurpur Industrial Area, Faridabad, Haryana by various engineering companies.

As per the plea, nearly 100-200 "Red category" and highly polluting units are illegally operating in the Sarurpur Industrial area which burns approximately 40-50 tons of e-waste daily which has made the environment of the region toxic.

**E**-waste contains lead, cadmium, mercury, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), brominated flame retardants (BFRs), chromium, beryllium, etc and long term exposure to these substances damages the nervous system, kidney, bones, and the reproductive and endocrine systems

**T**he NGT, in the order dated February 4, said the activity of unscientific handling and disposal of e-waste is a hazardous activity having the potential for serious damage to public health and the environment

The magnitude of air pollution is such that the visibility up to 2-3 kilometers is affected, it pointed out. These units collect the leftover ash from the e-waste after it is burnt and load them in the tractors and tippers which take this ash and dump unscientifically in the open area and landfills, which proves to be a threat to the environment.

People residing in nearby colonies and areas are facing devastating impacts on their health

and on the city's environment. Around 10-15 people residing in the area have also lost their eye vision due to the toxic air pollutants released in the air by the burning of e-waste. E-waste contains lead, cadmium, mercury, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), brominated flame retardants (BFRs), chromium, and beryllium among others.

Long term exposure to these substances damages the nervous system, kidney, bones, and the reproductive and endocrine systems, the plea read.

Considering the complaint, the NGT in the order dated February 4, said the activity of unscientific handling and disposal of e-waste is a hazardous activity having the potential for serious damage to public health and the environment.

It also noted that handlers are mostly illiterate and unskilled people for financial gain by high-scale operators without concern for their safety. There is an undoubted need for continuous vigilance in view of huge gaps in compliance with the Rules notified earlier.

The statutory Rules provide for specific responsibilities of manufacturers and handlers of such waste as well as remedial action by the statutory regulators but on account of lack of compliance, a large number of accidents take place resulting in death and diseases.

This aspect needs to be considered in light of the facts on the ground in the present case, the green court observed.

Further, the tribunal also constituted a four-member joint committee comprising Member Secretary, State PCB, CPCB, Faridabad District Magistrate and Municipal Corporation Commissioner to undertake a visit to the site, directing the joint panel to file its findings in a month.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** Taking strong action against corruption, the state government gave compulsory retirement to five more officials.

They included an engineer, a CDPO, an anganwadi supervisor, a police inspector and a revenue supervisor. With this, the government has so far removed 146 corrupt and inefficient officials, official sources said here Tuesday.

Assistant engineer of Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Baripada, Santosh Kumar Das, is facing a corruption case. The Odisha Vigilance had arrested him for possessing disproportionate assets amounting to ₹2.80 crores including ₹41.77 lakh in cash.

His properties includes a two-storied building in Bhubaneswar; a flat in Sailashree Vihar, a half-con-



**Notably, the state government recently sacked a senior IFS officer and a senior IAS officer for corruption**

structed building in Kalinga Vihar and three flats in Balasore.

Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) of Balikuda in Jagatsinghpur district, Sarala Dei, is facing a corruption case. She had been apprehended by Vigilance while accepting a bribe of ₹20,000.

During the raids, it was revealed

that she is in possession of 5 housing plots in Bhubaneswar, one plot in Pipili and two plots in Jagatsinghpur.

Anganwadi supervisor of Balikuda, Pratima Sahu, who faces corruption charges, has been told to go on retirement. She was also arrested by Vigilance while accepting bribe. Ramchandra Behera, an inspector of Police Training College in Angul, who is facing several allegations of inefficiency and indiscipline, has been asked to step down from the service.

Revenue Supervisor Hrudanand Sahu, working in teshil office in Keonjhar district, has been asked to go on retirement on corruption charge. He was nabbed by the Vigilance while accepting a bribe of ₹20,000. Notably, the state government recently sacked a senior IFS officer and a senior IAS officer on corruption charges.

## CP drive to sensitise mobile shop owners

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** Worried over rampant mobile theft and snatching cases in City, the Commissionerate Police Tuesday launched a drive to sensitise mobile shop owners and servicing centers over the rising crime.

DCP Umashankar Dash told media that City police teams will visit mobile repairing and retail shops under their jurisdictions asking them to keep details of the customers requesting to unlock mobile sets. A genuine owner can forget the password or pattern lock in extremely rare case. The looters usually approach the mobile repairing shops posing as the owners, to break the pattern, password or fingerprint lock to resell the same.

DCP Dash told OrissaPOST that the police officials would regularly visit such shops to know about any suspicious persons approaching them. This would help City police check the rapidly increasing mobile snatching and theft cases.

## Mahtab seeks Centre's reply on opening of Awas portal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Bhartruhari Mahtab Tuesday asked the Union Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Giriraj Singh whether the Centre will open the window of Awas Portal to include the left out beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G).

Speaking during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, the BJD MP said Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had in December last year written to the Prime Minister expressing his gratitude for sanctioning 8.17 lakh houses under the PMAY. However, many eligible beneficiaries in at least 16 districts of Odisha have been deprived of the pucca house under the PMAY-G as the Centre is not opening the portal, the Cuttack MP said.

"Repeated requests have been made to the Centre in this regard. But, to no avail. However, the



Centre opened the portal for Karnataka," Mahtab added.

In his response, the Union Minister said in order to identify left out beneficiaries under PMAY-G, the Union government held Awaas+ survey in 2018. Despite a year of extension, Odisha did not take part in the survey, Singh said, adding that altogether 8.17 lakh houses have been allotted to Odisha under the scheme.

## 72K TO APPEAR OSSTET TODAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Feb 8:** As the state is set to hold the Odisha Secondary School Teacher Eligibility Test (OSSTET) Wednesday, the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) Tuesday said that candidates found indulged in malpractice will be debarred from taking the test again.

According to BSE sources, as many as 72,280 candidates will appear the test across 338 centres in Odisha. "While 68,742 candidates will appear Paper-I from 9am to 11:30am, 3,538 teacher aspirants will take up Paper-II from 1pm to 3:30pm," it was learnt. The BSE has created 40 nodal centres.

Squads have been formed to smooth conduct of the test. An exam control room has also been set up at BSE office here.

## Khimji Jewellers launches collection 'Lovestruck-22'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** Valentine's week is all about celebrating love and affection for a special one in your life. It signifies the meeting of two hearts and Khimji Jewellers, the most trusted and preferred Jewellery brand of Odisha, announced the launch of 'Lovestruck-2022' as an exclusive collection of affordable diamond jewellery themed on the heart.

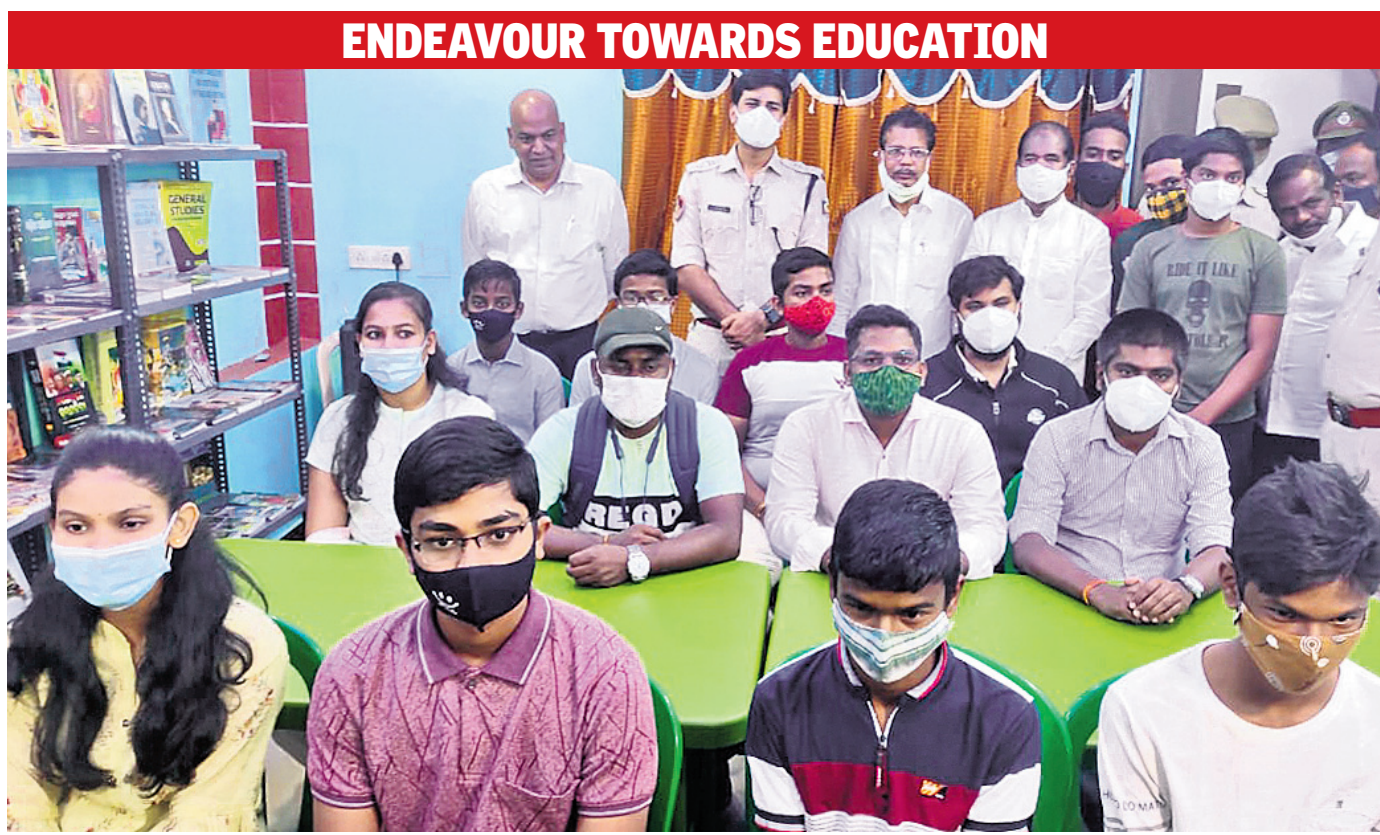
The exquisite collection includes diamond studded gold pendants, rings, bracelets, and ear-studs available in all the six stores in Odisha.

Speaking on the occasion, Mitesh Khimji, director of Khimji Jewellers, said, "Valentine's week is an occasion to celebrate our loved ones. As diamond with its beauty and toughness has been universally known as the symbol of eternal love, we have come up with this unique heart themed collection. Each piece in this collection is uniquely crafted and selected to cater to this theme, while being affordable. Crafted with love and passion the 'Lovestruck-22' collection epitomises the perfect expression of love for our loved ones."

Adding more zing to this Valentine's week, Khimji Jewellers also announced a 'Selfie Contest' and a 'Lucky Draw' for its valued customers starting from February 7 and culminating with a grand celebration February 14.

To participate in the contest, one has to click a picture in the designated selfie zone, set up at the Khimji stores, and upload it to their Instagram page. Participants with highest likes will be declared as winner.

All customers buying from the Lovestruck range will also be eligible to participate in the 'Lucky Draw' with a chance to win a gold coin.



Twin City Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarsi inaugurates the Ama Sahi library in Khannagar area of Cuttack, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

## Prez likely to visit Puri February 19

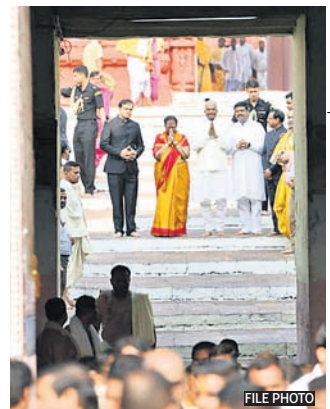
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 8:** President Ram Nath Kovind is likely to arrive in Puri February 19 and return the following day, according to media reports.

Puri district administration is yet to issue an official statement regarding the President's visit. However, media reports indicate that the President will attend a religious programme in Puri February 20.

At the Saradhabali Ground in Puri, Kovind will launch a programme commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad.

The President will also pay a visit to Srila Prabhupad's birthplace, Shree Chaitanya Gaudiy Math at 10:30am. He will then attend the inaugural ceremony at Saradhabali Ground. He is



likely to visit the Srimandir to pay obeisance to Lord Jagannath and His Siblings.

According to media reports, the Puri district administration has commenced preparations for the President's visit. President Ram Nath Kovind, accompanied by his wife Savita Kovind, had paid a three-day visit to Odisha in March 2021.

# GIRIJA BHUSAN PATNAIK—A FRIEND AND MENTOR

**G**irija Babu had left Ravenshaw before I entered the institute in 1958. But, the halo created by him was still lingering. As the president of the students' union Girija Bhusan Patnaik, a person with Communist leanings, had brought the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Ravenshaw College to address the students. Nehru came to Ravenshaw in spite of the advice of the police to the contrary.

I came in contact with him only when I was posted in Cuttack as the staff officer in the state police headquarters in the early seventies. A friendship grew between us even though he was quite senior to me in age. We vibed passionately in sev-

eral areas, including our cultural heritage, particularly that of Cuttack and our alma mater, Ravenshaw.

Girija Patnaik remained a leader till his last with a passion to serve the people of Odisha. Although I was in government service and was bound by many rules, his inspiring company prompted me to cross the Laxman Rekha many times. As a person he was full of warmth, highly companionable and exuded camaraderie. This enabled him to have a very wide circle of friends including politicians, bureaucrats, educationists, lawyers, technocrats and business people.

He was beyond caste, community, religion and narrow regionalism. His abode 'The Universe' at Maitree Sarani in Cuttack was a centre for



meetings, seminars, discussions and get-togethers. International seminars on various topics were attended by eminent people from India and abroad.

A significant event in the annals of Cuttack was the celebration of 1000 years of the city organised by The Universe under the direct and meticulous supervision of Girija Babu. The President of India had inaugurated the event. It was a memorable event, which concluded with the publication of two volumes on the history of Cuttack and decision of the ASI to further excavate the Barabati fort.

Reviving the architectural heritage of Cuttack was taken up with inspiring zeal. We decided to urge the state government and the Centre to revive the moat of Barabati fort. A project report was prepared and sent to then Union Tourism Minister Srikanta Jena, who readily agreed to provide Rs 50 lakh

for the purpose.

However, the proposal got lost in the quagmire of politics. We formed a branch of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) in 1995 at "The Universe" with then Chief Minister JB Patnaik gracing the occasion.

Girija Babu had a lot of contribution to our alma mater, Ravenshaw College. As per his initiative, we, a group of Ravenshawians, formed a trust in 1994 with the objective of making Ravenshaw a university. It took us 10 years spanning over the tenures of three Chief Ministers—Biju Patnaik, JB Patnaik and Naveen Patnaik—to achieve our goal in 2005.

Several meetings were held at

"The Universe" with the participation of politicians, bureaucrats and eminent Ravenshawians. Girija Babu was always there as a smiling host, a zealous activist and an unbending Ravenshawian.

Girija Babu's falling health could not deter him to march ahead and serve the society. Mrs Kamal Kumari Patnaik, an educationist and writer on her own right, was the perfect foil for the richness of "The Universe". Nostalgia haunts me when I think of the multifaceted yet very human Girija Patnaik and the incomparable "The Universe" he had nurtured.

*Amiya Bhusan Tripathy, IPS (Retd.) Former Director General of Police, Odisha*

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SHORT TAKES

**BU Vice-Chancellor seeks retirement**

**Berhampur:** Vice-Chancellor of Berhampur University Professor Gobind J Chakrapani will demit from his post April 30, five months before his scheduled retirement. Professor Chakrapani was earlier working as director of IIT, Roorkee and joined as vice-chancellor of Berhampur University, October 2019. He was scheduled to retire September 30, 2022. The matter came to the fore after the state Higher Education department published a notification inviting applications from eligible candidates for appointment to the post, Monday. When contacted, Professor Chakrapani said he is retiring due to personal reasons. According to the notification, the aspirants for the vice-chancellor's post should submit their applications by March 7.

**Two teachers suspended**

**Jajpur:** The Jajpur district administration Tuesday placed two teachers of government-run schools under suspension on charges of breaching Model Code of Conduct, which has come into force for panchayat elections. Jajpur Collector Chakravarty Singh Rathore has suspended Kumar Chandra Sukla of Gamu Nodal High School and Nakula Chandra Rout of Serapur Primary School in Bari block after they allegedly campaigned for the candidates of a particular political party. "The two teachers have been placed under suspension for violation of Model Code of Conduct in connection with elections to Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs), 2022," said the Collector in the order.

**FLAG MARCH**



Police personnel take out a flag march at G Udayagiri in Kandhamal district, Tuesday, ahead of the panchayat polls

**SHOW MUST GO ON**



People negotiate a narrow makeshift passage after the old bridge on Dhobi nullah near railway station road at Mudipada in Sambalpur was demolished for construction of a bridge

**Suspected ultras torch equipment**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Phulbani, Feb 8:** Suspected Maoists set afire two road construction equipment in Kandhamal district in protest against conducting the three-tier panchayat elections in the state, police said Tuesday.

The incident took place at Kiamunda village under the jurisdiction of Phiringia Police station Monday night.

The construction work was being carried out by a private company, said P Shyamsundar Rao, the inspector-in-charge of Phiringia police station.

Police said the ultras, suspected to be members of Kalahandi-Kandhamal-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division of the banned CPI (Maoist), reached the construction site around midnight and torched the equipment.

Some handwritten Maoist posters were also spotted at the scene, with an appeal to the villagers to boycott

■ Ultras, suspected to be members of Kalahandi-Kandhamal-Boudh-Nayagarh division of the banned CPI (Maoist), reached the construction site around midnight and torched the equipment

■ Some handwritten Maoist posters were also spotted at the scene, with an appeal to the villagers to boycott the ensuing panchayat polls, withdrawal of CRPF camps in the area and the district, and adequate payment of wages to labourers

The panchayat polls will be held in five phases between February 16 and February 24.



**AIDS bomb ticking in Balasore**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, Feb 8:** Notwithstanding massive awareness programmes, the scourge of HIV/AIDS is yet to subside in Balasore, with youths accounting for a majority of the infected in the district - the third in terms of HIV infections in the state, a report said.

According to the report, altogether 1,768 people were found positive for HIV in the northern district of the state between 2003 and 2021.

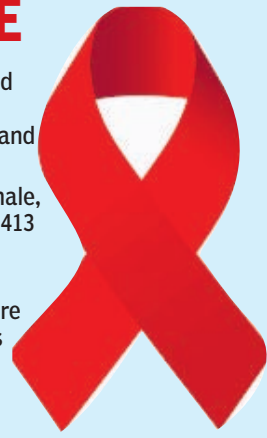
Among the HIV infected, 937 are male, 606 female and 103 children while 413 people have died of the deadly virus. Similarly, 122 pregnant women were also found to be infected with the virus.

Sources said, 7, 64, 559 people have undergone counselling during the same period. Of them, 7, 16, 885 have volunteered for HIV testing.

It was found that HIV infection

**HIV SCOURGE**

- Altogether 1,768 people were found positive for HIV in the northern district of the state between 2003 and 2021
- Among the HIV-infected, 937 are male, 606 female and 103 children while 413 people have died of the killer virus
- Similarly, 122 pregnant women were found to be infected with the virus
- HIV infection is high in Sadar, Jaleswar, Soro and Khaira blocks where youths are highly infected



Blood samples of people are being tested at ICTC while patients are being administered medicines at antiretroviral therapy (ART) centre. Patients from Mayurbhanj are also provided medicines from Balasore ART centre.

It was said that data of the infected people have been maintained for medicine disbursement while scores of other HIV-infected are yet to come out for tests. Fear of being ostracised is dragging their feet, it is learnt.

HIV testing was affected for two years due to the pandemic, but 18 people have tested positive for the virus during the last two months as tests resumed.

Many are of the view that even though the government is pumping in crores of rupees for spreading awareness about prevention of HIV/AIDS, the programme has failed to achieve the desired goal in the coastal district.

was found in almost all the blocks while HIV infection is high in Sadar, Jaleswar, Soro and Khaira blocks where youths are highly infected, according to the information available from the district health department.

It was learnt that at least five to six people were found HIV positive during the test at the district headquarters hospital every day. Earlier, the HIV testing was affected due to Covid-19 restrictions, but now testing is being conducted regularly.

**Andhra's fresh bid to gain hold over Kotia**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pottangi, Feb 8:** Andhra Pradesh is trying every trick in the book to gain hold over Kotia panchayat under Pottangi block of Koraput district and to undermine Odisha's interest and stake in the area, a report said.

Among many such methods, the neighbouring state is meddling in each and every affair of the panchayat notwithstanding the framework it should adopt to maintain cordial relationship with Odisha as part of interstate relations.

In the latest incident, a team of Andhra police reached Kotia panchayat and tried to collect details of the candidates contesting for the Odisha panchayat polls in the panchayat, Monday. The matter came to the fore when a team of Andhra police met Pottangi BDO Soumya Sarthak Mishra at his office and tried to collect details about the candidates but in vain.

Claiming that Kotia panchayat is under Salur police jurisdiction in AP, a police team led by SI Rohini



Pathi of Vizianagaram police arrived in two jeeps at Pottangi block office. They met the BDO in his office and sought details about the candidates contesting as sarpanch for the panchayat polls.

They were left disappointed after Mishra politely refused to oblige. Mishra said he does not have the details of all the candidates as he has handed over all the records to the district administration after completion of the nomination

process. The police team, after their unsuccessful bid, visited the Pottangi tehsildar in his office and tried to collect the details of the candidates again. However, here also they met the same fate and finally returned back to their place. This has sparked resentment in the area and a question mark on the actual intention of the Andhra police.

Meanwhile, in another development, the Andhra Pradesh gov-

**BORDER DISPUTE**

■ A team of Andhra Pradesh police, Monday, met Pottangi BDO Soumya Sarthak Mishra at his office and tried to collect details of the candidates contesting panchayat polls but in vain

■ The police team, after their unsuccessful attempt, visited the Pottangi tehsildar in his office and tried to collect the details of the candidates again. However, here also they met the same fate and finally returned back to their place

ernment has launched efforts to provide quality healthcare services to the people of Kotia panchayat. Its officials are identifying places where internet network is available and calling people to the area and uploading their data online.

The matter came to the light after Andhra officials were spotted uploading data of people in bio-

metric process along the road connecting the Fagunsineri village in the panchayat.

When contacted, one of the officials said they are carrying out the drive on the instructions of Andhra Chief Minister to provide healthcare services to the residents. The gullible people were found cooperating and assisting the Andhra officials in their work. They are meeting Andhra officials and providing them details of their family members and their thumb impression in biometric process.

**Kotia integral part of Odisha: Koraput DM**

**K**oraput Collector Abdaal M Akhtar Tuesday said Andhra Pradesh should not worry about the law and order in Kotia as the state police is there to look after the situation. Moreover, Kotia is an integral part of Odisha, he reiterated. The Collector said this while referring to the visit of Andhra police team to Pottangi police station, block and tehsil offices Monday.

**Digapahandi frontline BJP leaders resign en masse**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, Feb 8:** Ahead of the panchayat elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unit in Digapahandi Assembly constituency of Ganjam is imploding, leaving the poll prospects of the party candidates in doubt. The discontentment among party cadres took a new turn Tuesday when many frontline workers resigned from their posts en masse.

The disgruntled leaders issued a press statement alleging that the BJP leadership has neglected them in the panchayat elections.

"The candidates for four zilla parishad zones and various panchayats have been selected on the advice of some leaders from outside, without taking us into confidence," they said.

The BJP leaders who resigned from the party include Suryanarayan Sahu, Manoj Kumar Panda, Subhendu Padhi, Santosh Sahu, Mrutyunjay Panda, Pradip Kumar Das and Pratap Bisoyi.

It was learnt that all of them have sent their resignations to BJP's state unit president Samir Mohanty, organisation secretary Manas Mohanty, state general secretary Lekhashree Samantsinghar, state executive body members Bhruhu Buxipatra and Pinki Pradhan.

Political observers said the saffron party's Digapahandi unit is a divided house as two groups are



**Disgruntled leaders issued a press statement alleging that the BJP leadership has neglected them in the panchayat elections**

busy working against each other. Some local and frontline leaders are complicit in anti-party activities while resignation of many leaders just ahead of the panchayat elections is a pointer to the beginning of BJP's downfall, they added.

With fissures deepening in the party, more workers in the area are expected to follow the suit in a few days, said sources.

**Climate change hits nesting of Olive Ridleys**



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Ganjam, Feb 8:** Mass nesting of rare Olive Ridley turtles on Rushikulya sea mouth near Purunabandha village in this district was affected by a sudden change in climatic conditions, forest officials said Tuesday.

The Rushikulya river mouth is con-

sidered the second-biggest rookery in India after Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Kendrapara district. Lakhs of endangered Olive Ridley turtles flock to the Rushikulya river mouth every year for their annual mass nesting in Ganjam district.

These endangered species through the place every year from the third

■ **RUSHIKULYA RIVER MOUTH IS CONSIDERED THE SECOND-BIGGEST ROOKERY IN INDIA AFTER GAHIRMATHA MARINE SANCTUARY IN KENDRAPARA DISTRICT**

■ **FOREST DEPARTMENT HAS ERECTED PLASTIC FENCES ON A STRETCH OF 1.5 KM TILL PODAMPETA TO PROTECT THE MARINE SPECIES FROM THE WRATH OF THE WILD ANIMALS**

Nayak, however, hoped that the climatic conditions will soon change and thousands of turtles will soon start laying eggs on the beach.

Meanwhile, the Forest department has erected plastic fences on the beach on a stretch of 1.5 km till Podampeta to protect the marine species from the wrath of the wild animals. The fences are of 2-metre height which will help the turtles from being killed by wild animals, he said.

Notably, over 500 turtles had laid eggs on the beach late Saturday night. The eggs normally take 45 days to hatch. Tiny hatchlings come out and make their way to the sea upon hatching.

On being informed, DFO Nayak and forest ranger Siddharth Shankar Sahu rushed to the beach and took stock of the mass nesting. The turtles were found to have laid eggs from Podampeta to Siddhant Nagar which is to the north of the beach. Moreover, various steps are being taken to ensure the security of the rare turtles.

week of February to the first week of March for nesting. Odisha is the largest mass nesting site for Oliver Ridleys in the world.

Over 500 turtles had laid eggs after southern wind blew February 5, DFO Amlan Kumar Nayak said. However, a change in climatic conditions has hindered their mass nesting, he stated.

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**POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)**

**APPENDIX - IV, [Rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)**

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice (s) issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The Borrower (s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of PCFHL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

Name of the Borrower (s) & Co-borrower (s)	Description of the Secured Assets	Date of Demand Notice & Amount	Date of Possession
Loan App No. 01477830 Loan Code No. 00001593 Branch : Bhubaneswar Branch Gyanendra Swain, Rabindra Nath Swain & Saralata Swain	All that part and parcel of Property bearing - Khata No. 193/70, Plot Nos. 232/995 233/996 Mouza - Desumthi, Tahasil - Gop, Near Banamara Mahadev, Gop, Puri, Orissa, Pin - 752107	24.09.2021 & Rs. 6,52,567.00	03.02.2022
Loan App No. 00561899 Loan Code No. 00000319 Branch : Bhubaneswar Branch Jyotsna Rani Sahoo & Chandra Sekhar Sahoo	All that part and parcel of Property bearing - Hal Plot No. 225/1130, Khata No. 40, Mouza - Mundamal Jajpur Road, Cuttack, Orissa, Pin- 755019	24.09.2021 & Rs. 1,49,129.00	03.02.2022
Loan App No. 01424009 Loan Code No. 00001551 Branch : Bhubaneswar Branch Pabitra Baral, Bahan Baral & Dilip Kumar Baral	All that part and parcel of Property bearing - Khata No. 350/86, Plot No. 232, Khata No. 350/81, Plot No. 233, Mouza - Aiangapur, Tl - Astaranga, Astaranga, Puri, Orissa, Pin- 752109	24.09.2021 & Rs. 12,77,997.00	03.02.2022

Date : 09.02.2022  
Place : Bhubaneswar

Sd/- Authorised Officer  
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited



It is not God who made man wicked. It is man who makes himself wicked by separating himself from God.

THE MOTHER



## Opposition Bashing

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is known for his gift of the gab and he displayed it once again during his over an hour-long reply February 7 to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address. He is also known to be an expert in sidestepping main issues with theatrics, twisting facts, conveniently forgetting his own actions in the past and ridiculing the Congress. For, he lashed out at the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi instead of answering Opposition's charges on the high inflation rate, unprecedented unemployment and alleged mismanagement of the pandemic. He used the Parliament, as he has done in the past, to deliver emotive election speeches without offering concrete evidence to counter the Opposition's allegations. The PM glibly went on bashing the Congress and comparing his government's performance with the record of previous Congress rule starting from Jawaharlal Nehru down to the UPA government.

The Opposition too is failing badly. For instance, when Rahul Gandhi tries to taunt the government on its crony capitalist policies of encouraging just a couple of industrial houses who are favourites of the Prime Minister, he does not dare to clearly spell out how he would do it differently, or change what he thinks are current mistakes, if he ever comes to power. An example is the way Rahul spoke about the Modi government offering all ports and airports all over the country to only one company. He tried to point out this monopolisation but did not spell out if he would take back the public funded infrastructure units from the singular private player if he came to power. This kind of nabby-pamby smoke drill will obviously leave no impression in the minds of the average young Indian voter about any alternatives.

People across the length and breadth of this country are aware that voting for BJP is voting for Hindutva and all its side effects. On the other hand, no one is certain what voting for Congress would imply. The side-talk that is doing the rounds about the Gandhi family, including Robert Vadra, being protected and paid for by the BJP leadership to remain as they are, no more seems to be a joke.

The country is infinitely larger than a political entity called the Congress and the PM's speech should have been on addressing grave problems facing the country such as inflation, joblessness, a collapsing economy and monumental sufferings of the people due to inept government handling of the pandemic. The PM did not speak directly on what had caused inflationary pressures on the Indian economy, but merely mentioned how supply chain and logistics support systems across the world have collapsed. He even went as far back in history as the Korean war and said that Jawaharlal Nehru had supposedly claimed that inflation in India was because of the war in Korea. While the mention of such invaluable historical statements could be amusing to a student of history, those who support such inane opinions probably could argue that Nehru's faulty policies were responsible for the Indian economy faltering today. Somehow, these people conveniently forget that the present party in power takes great pride in its singular achievement of scrapping thousands of outdated laws. If that is an achievement, then all the bad laws of Nehru era should have also been done away with by now.

On the all-important issue of increasing joblessness, Modi skirted Opposition criticism that his government's decisions over the last few years such as Demonetization, a flawed Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime and lack of support to MSMEs were primarily responsible for precipitating the largest-ever unemployment rate in over 50 years. Instead of taking the Opposition head-on on this matter, Modi spoke of his government's 'vision' and blamed previous governments for propagating the idea that the government is the only 'bhagya vidhaata', meaning that only the government can shape people's lives by creating job opportunities. "The thought has impeded Indian youth's 'kaushal' (skill) and dreams. The political class has only encouraged such an egotistic thought. No, the government doesn't have to do everything," he said. Although this idea is very reasonable, this is also a classic case of the government disowning its responsibility to provide livelihood to the people leaving them at the mercy of private capital.

The PM's intention to turn the Parliament into a platform for electioneering was most evident in his unfounded claim that the Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party and the Shiv Sena were responsible for spreading the coronavirus by providing train and bus tickets for daily wage earning migrants who desperately needed to get to their villages in the face of the first, sudden lockdown he had announced in March 2020. "You people (pointing at the Opposition benches) pushed the labourers into difficulties," he said. But, this was an egregious statement since everyone knew most migrant labourers were thrown into a survival crisis after the PM announced the lockdown giving the people only four hours to prepare for it. And it was the Prime Minister's personal decision to bring back thousands of stranded Indians from many coronavirus infected countries starting with the first flight from Wuhan of China, the birth centre of the virus.

Prevarication, deliberate forgetfulness and election rhetoric should not be what the Prime Minister offers while replying on the Motion of Thanks to the President for his address in the Parliament.

### WISDOM CORNER

- The Lord is in me, the Lord is in you, as life is in every seed, put false pride away and seek the Lord within. KABIR
- It is easy to hate and it is difficult to love. This is how the whole scheme of things works. All good things are difficult to achieve; and bad things are very easy to get. CONFUCIUS
- Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. RUMI

### WORDSWORTH

#### Sabermetrician

It means a person who studies baseball statistics. It's not a particularly well-used word anywhere, though better known than it was, but it's almost unknown outside North America, even among the minority who follow baseball in other countries. The game is unusual among competitive sports in that there has been no fundamental change in the rules for almost a century and that, as with cricket but unlike most other team sports, statistics on the performance of individual players have real meaning. So it is possible to compare the players of today with those of previous generations in a meaningful way. The term is first attested in the early 1980s, and derives from the acronym SABR, short for the Society for American Baseball Research, whose members collect and analyse baseball statistics. Several compounds are known, such as sabermetrics for the discipline. This is a recent appearance: You know, Davey's always been on the cutting edge. This is a guy who was employing sabermetrics before there was even a sabermetrician. Like I said, he's a thinking man's manager, he's a player's manager, he's a guy who loves the game, knows the game inside out, and he has a track record that's second to none (The Washington Post, 26 Jun. 2011).

### LOL

#### Discussing Grades

A high-school student came home from school seeming rather depressed. "What's the matter, son," asked his



mother. "Aw, gee," said the boy, "It's my marks. They're all wet." "What do you mean all wet?" "I mean," he replied, "below C-level."



Ian Buruma

PRIVATE DONORS, WHETHER FORMER CRIMINALS OR NOT, HAVE PERSONAL INTERESTS

### IN JEST THIS

# Spoil your ties with alcohol, not with others



Melvin Durai

IF YOU'RE A DRINKER, IT'S ALWAYS WISE TO DRINK IN MODERATION. BUT UNLIKE IN AN INTERNET FORUM, YOU HAVE TO SERVE AS YOUR OWN MODERATOR

I'm grateful to my mother for a lot of things, but one of the most important is that she urged me not to drink. Actually, 'urged' is not the right word. It was more like 'forbade.'

My mother forbade me from drinking alcohol. She saw it as a sin. And though almost every adult in her close family now drinks, at least occasionally, she still sees it as a sin. She is surrounded by sinners, including me. But let me explain.

Let me explain my relationship with alcohol. We never liked each other. We still don't really like each other. But now and then, we spend time together. Sometimes, we even allow other people to see us together.

Because my mom forbade me from drinking, I did not touch alcohol in my twenties. While my friends were drinking beer at parties, I was drinking Coke and Fanta. But when I turned 30, I de-

cidated to re-evaluate my relationship with alcohol. Could we actually get along if we followed some reasonable limits? Could we have just a cordial relationship—not a passionate, "till death do us part" relationship like some of my friends had?

I decided to try beer, and let me tell you, from the very first sip, I hated it. It was bitter. "Stop drinking that!" my taste buds screamed in unison.

Beer is an acquired taste. But how exactly do you acquire it? By drinking more of it, apparently. "No way," my taste buds said. "Give us Coke and Fanta."

Most forms of alcohol are too strong for me, but I do enjoy sweet wines and cocktails. I have a drink once a month on average, never more than a glass at a time. I appreciate our monthly get-togethers, but have no interest in taking the relationship any further. I won't be bringing a bottle home to

meet mother.

So why am I still grateful to my mother? Because she ensured that I wouldn't get hooked on drinking while I was young. When I finally had a drink, I was wise enough not to drink too much.

If you're a drinker, it's always wise to drink in moderation. But here's the problem: unlike in an internet forum, you have to serve as your own moderator. You have to be the one to press the 'delete' button on the second drink.

Drinking in moderation may actually offer some health benefits, as research has shown. It may, for example, reduce your risk of developing heart disease. But if you're looking for health benefits, you are far better off adopting a healthy diet or exercise regimen. That's because even moderate amounts of alcohol can put you at higher risk for cancer; not to mention the risk of saying or doing something stupid.

Every time you drink, there is also the risk of getting carried away and drinking heavily. Alcohol is addictive, after all, and habitual drinking will put you at risk for all kinds of health problems, not just cancer, but liver disease, stroke, pancreatitis, high blood pressure, and a cracked skull. How would you get a cracked skull? By having an accident while you are drunk—or getting hit by another drunk person at the bar.

Actually, a cracked skull may be the least of your worries if you get behind the wheel of a car. You will endanger not only your life, but the lives of many other people.

Alcohol has been the cause of many accidents, as well as many fights—and not just at bars. It has broken up numerous families, destroyed countless relationships.

So before having another glass of beer, ask yourself this important question: which relationship do you value more?

### FOCUS PROPAGANDA

# WHEN MONEY SMELLS



Research can be expensive for cash-strapped universities, and many countries, including China, are more than happy to help. The question is whether universities, or indeed media outlets, should ever accept money from donors that have a political interest in the returns on their generosity

other institutions that have a political interest in the returns on their generosity.

For example, the British literary magazine Encounter got into trouble in 1967 when revelations of the CIA's indirect sponsorship of the publication led to the resignation of its editor, Stephen Spender. In the 1980s, when Japan's increasing economic power was spooking many in the West, US universities that accepted Japanese corporate money were much criticised, even when they claimed there were no strings attached. At the same time, some critics of Japanese corporate power were being sponsored by European or American institutions.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with official or unofficial subsidies. But when there is a problem, it is usually for one of two reasons: reputational embellishment or political influence-peddling.

In the mid-1990s, Oxford University was riled by the "Flick affair." Gert-Rudolf Flick, the perfectly respectable grandson of a prominent German industrialist, offered to sponsor a Flick Chair in European Thought. After a lot of hand-wringing, the university turned down the money, because the Flick company had profited from concentration-camp slave labour during World War II, and

Flick's grandfather, Friedrich, had been convicted of war crimes.

One may well ask whether instituting a Rupert Murdoch Chair of Language and Communication at Oxford was any better. Murdoch is not a war criminal, but he is still a highly controversial media and political player. Then there is the case of Japan's Ryoichi Sasakawa, whose Sasakawa Peace Foundation doles out large sums to many institutions, including Yale University. Sasakawa was a gangster and a fascist (and a suspected war criminal), but he is no longer a political player because he died in 1995.

Still, taking cash from someone seeking to buff their tainted reputation, though sleazy, is less dangerous to the intellectual integrity of universities or media than political propaganda. And this is where things get tricky.

Some governments are more respectable than others. French, German, or even (still) American democracy is preferable to the authoritarianism of Putin or Chinese President Xi Jinping. Clearly, the United States uses its "soft power" to further its own interests, too. But one difference is that, unlike in a dictatorship, propaganda is still a dirty word in a liberal democracy. It is a little easier to preserve a degree of independence in the con-

text of American soft power (as was true of Encounter, which was an excellent magazine).

But maintaining even some independence is not always simple. US universities have received financing not only from Japanese companies, but also from the Japanese government, especially for Japan studies. MIT's Richard J. Samuels, a distinguished political scientist, said about this: "Once you have an endowment, it's arm's length and the role of the donor ceases with the delivery of the gift."

There is no reason to doubt Samuels' word. The Japanese government is probably too sophisticated to exert direct pressure on the content of the scholarships and programmes it sponsors, though some professors have told me in private that there could be worry of needlessly upsetting donors by supporting doctoral research on subjects that might seem provocative.

China, however, goes about things in a very different way. Criticism of Xi, especially but not only regarding human rights in Xinjiang or Tibet, is quickly punished. China slapped economic sanctions on Australia after the Australian government called for an independent inquiry into the origins of COVID-19. Similarly, Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, was barred from entering Hong Kong because his organisation had criticised China's human-rights record. In short, what Peverelli, or anyone else, really thinks is irrelevant. Subsidies from China don't come without a quid pro quo.

This may be true of many kinds of financial support. What matters is whether there are strings attached. Universities need cash. Media organisations have commercial imperatives. Governments have political priorities. Private donors, whether former criminals or not, have personal interests.

But academic independence cannot be guaranteed if financial donations come with expectations of intellectual conformity and political compliance. The Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has realised this now. Better late than never.

The writer is the author, most recently, of *The Churchill Complex: The Curse of Being Special, From Winston and FDR to Trump and Brexit* (Penguin, 2020).

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST  
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

#### Cong's Punjab challenge

Sir, This refers to "AAP to gain the most from Cong infighting" Orissa POST, Feb 8. Given the hype surrounding the Congress naming its chief ministerial face for the upcoming Assembly elections in Punjab, one can be forgiven for assuming that the party has already won, and current chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, a Dalit, will continue in the chair. The question however is, whether this burst of elation takes the Congress towards an absolute majority or not. Punjab's huge Dalit population is politically fragmented and the community is divided into at least 39 sub-castes with each fighting for benefits within the SC pie. They have also sought the patronage of different political parties over time and do not subscribe to a common ideology. Their loyalties towards the SAD and now the AAP will matter. It also needs to be pointed out that, the Bahujan Samaj Party that germinated in Punjab could never get the consolidated support of this segment for the same reasons. For the Congress, whatever it gains from the Dalits will be negated by the upper caste Hindus and Jat Sikhs who will most certainly desert the party in large numbers. Ever since Channi was elevated in September last, upper-caste Punjab has remained displeased. Many consoled themselves with the thought that perhaps the Congress will use him to woo Dalit votes and change horses if the party wins the election. This is not to be. Sidhu, a Jat Sikh, was made the PCC president to prevent alienation of Jat Sikhs who comprise some 20 per cent of the population and have dominated the politics and economy of the state for decades.

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

#### Farmers' concerns

Sir, Many countries including the USA and Asian nations have been toying with the COVID-relief packages. Even though there have been such relief packages getting underway, it is not that clear whether those promises have been really fulfilled or not. We have been coming across so many coronavirus casualties all up through this pandemic. True, finishing the virus once and for all is the prime objective. Besides, strengthening the all-round economy is the key now. Talking about the relief packages, it is pretty crucial and significant to safeguard farming and the people involved in it. If we are serious about getting food security in perfect place, immediate steps should go into helping the farming community.

P. Senthil Saravana Durai, MUMBAI

**of the day quote**

**There was no need to have a separate Budget for agriculture**

**NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR**  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

**Wearing uniform is a routine thing, why are they making it an issue (Hijab)? And when school has issued a guideline, everyone should follow it. What is the fuss about it? Undertakings have also been given by students and their parents to follow the dress code**

**PRALHAD JOSHI** | PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER

**Congress because of its anti-Dalit and anti-poor stance neither conferred Bharat Ratna on Dr B R Ambedkar nor on Kanshi Ram though they qualified for it in all respects**

**MAYAWATI** | BSP SUPREMO

**SHORT TAKES**

**Anganwadi operator shot dead**

**Patna:** An Anganwadi operator in Bihar's Begusarai district was shot dead by around a dozen armed people who attacked him at his home Tuesday morning, police said. His son and daughter, who tried to save him, also sustained gunshot injuries and are battling for their lives in Sadar hospital. The deceased was identified as Ranjeet Singh alias Heera. The incident took place in Vrindavan village under Navkothi police station around 10 a.m.

**NIA arrests Al-Qaeda man**

**New Delhi:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested an alleged terrorist of Al-Qaeda for hatching a conspiracy to execute an IED blast in Lucknow. A senior NIA official said that the accused was identified as Tawheed Ahmad Shah, a resident of Jammu & Kashmir. He was placed under arrest Monday. The official said that the earlier UP ATS lodged the case in July 2021 at Police Station Gomtinagar against the accused persons who had entered into a conspiracy for recruiting members for Al-Qaeda affiliate AGH (Ansaar Gajwatul Hind) and for carrying out terrorist activities in Lucknow.

**Teenager injured in landmine blast**

**Jammu:** A 15-year-old boy was seriously injured in a landmine explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir Tuesday, officials said. Mohd Yasar was walking near his house in Noorkote-Pothi village when he accidentally stepped on the landmine, causing it to explode, they said. The teenager suffered serious injuries on his left foot and was rushed to the hospital, the officials said.



**The BJP had tried it pretty hard in Bengal but it boiled down to one-on-one (contest between the TMC and BJP)**

**MAMATA BANERJEE** | TRINAMOOL CONGRESS CHIEF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Any act of sexual assault on kids should be viewed very seriously: SC**

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** Any act of sexual assault or harassment to the children should be viewed very seriously as their exploitation is a crime against humanity and society and a message must be conveyed by awarding suitable punishment to the accused, the Supreme Court said Tuesday.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and B V Nagarathna made the observations while upholding an order of Uttarakhand High Court convicting a man for the offences punishable under Sections 376(2)(i) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 5 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and imposing the punishment under Section 6 of the POCSO Act for sexual assault of the four-year-old girl.

"Any act of sexual assault or sexual harassment to the children should be viewed very seriously and all such



Representational image

offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment on the children have to be dealt with in a stringent manner and no leniency should be shown to a person who has committed the of-

**In our view, exploitation of children in such a manner is a crime against humanity and society. Therefore, the children and more particularly the girl child deserve full protection and need greater care and protection whether in the urban or rural areas**

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

fence under the POCSO Act," the bench said. The top court noted that the man, who was a neighbour of the victim, was aged approximately 65 years of age at the time of the commission of the offence. As a neighbour, it was the duty of the accused to protect the girl when alone rather than exploiting her innocence and vulnerability, it said. The bench said that the

accused instead of showing fatherly love, affection, and protection to the child against the evils of the society, rather made her the victim of lust.

It is a case where trust has been betrayed and social values are impaired, therefore, the accused as such does not deserve any sympathy and/or any leniency, the apex court said.

"By awarding a suitable punishment commensurate with the act of sexual assault, sexual harassment, a message must be conveyed to the society at large that, if anybody commits any offence under the POCSO Act of sexual assault, sexual harassment or use of children for pornographic purposes they shall be punished suitably and no leniency shall be shown to them.

"Cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment on the children are instances of perverse lust for sex where even innocent children are not spared in pursuit of such debased sexual pleasure," the bench said.

**2008 AHMEDABAD SERIAL BLASTS CASE**

**Gujarat court convicts 49 accused, acquits 28 others**



FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, Feb 8:** A special court here Tuesday convicted 49 accused in the case of Ahmedabad serial blasts in 2008 in which 56 people were killed and over 200 suffered injuries.

Judge A R Patel also acquitted 28 other accused, giving them the benefit of doubt, in the case pertaining to 21 synchronised blasts that had rocked the city in Gujarat. The hearing to decide the quantum of sentence for the convicted persons will start from Wednesday, the court said. Those convicted by the court include Safdar Nagori, Javed Ahmed, Atikur Rehman.

The 49 accused were convicted under Section 16 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, which deals with terrorism, and other provisions of the stringent act, as well as Indian Penal Code Sections

The court, which gave the verdict in the terror incident after 13 years, had concluded the trial against the 77 accused in Sept 2021

The trial began in December 2009 against 78 people connected to the banned terror outfit Indian Mujahideen (IM). The number of accused later came down to 77, after one of them turned approver.

Four more accused were arrested later, but their trial has not yet commenced, a senior government lawyer said

Fifty six people were killed and over 200 injured in 21 blasts that hit the city within a span of 70 minutes July 26, 2008

302 (murder) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy), special public prose-

cutor Amit Patel said.

He said the prosecution had cited the incident as an act of terrorism, and as many as 547 charge sheets were filed and 1,163 witnesses examined during the course of trial.

"The court acquitted 28 accused, giving them the benefit of doubt. Further details will be clear from the judgement, which we have not yet gone through," he said.

Among those acquitted are Mohammad Irfan, Nasir Ahmad and Shakeel Ahmed. All the accused attended the court proceedings Tuesday through video conferencing from different jails. They will also remain present virtually during the hearing on the quantum of sentence, Patel said.

The court had concluded the trial against the 77 accused in September last year. The police had claimed that people associated with the IM, a faction of radicals of the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), were involved in the blasts.

It was alleged that the IM terrorists had planned these blasts as a revenge for the 2002 post-Godhra riots, in which several persons from the minority community had died.

Days after the serial blasts in Ahmedabad, the police recovered bombs from different parts of Surat, following which 20 FIRs were registered in Ahmedabad and 15 in Surat. The trial was conducted after the court merged all the 35 FIRs.

**Youth trapped in Palakkad hill cleft for over 24 hrs**

*Several attempts have already been made to rescue the youth who is trapped on the hill side between rocks in the scorching heat with no water or food for more than a day*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Palakkad, Feb 8:** Similar to the story of a 2010 biographical survival drama film, 127 hours, about a man trapped by a boulder in an isolated canyon, a young man in Malampuzha area of Palakkad in

Kerala has been trapped on a hill between rocks since Monday with rescuers unable to reach him or provide him with food or water.

The difference between the film and the plight of Babu is that in the movie, which is based on real live events, there were no rescue attempts for the trapped person as no one knew where he was and he had to cut off his arm -- which was trapped under a boulder -- to free himself.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan also intervened and sought the help of the Army to rescue the youth. Subsequently, Lt General Arun of Army's Southern Command informed the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) that a specialised team will be starting from



Bengaluru soon, a release from CMO said.

The team, which specialises in mountaineering and rescue, would be travelling by road with travel by helicopter at night being impossible, the release said.

TV visuals indicated that after the Coast Guard efforts failed, a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team was attempting to reach the youth who appears to be sitting in a small recess on the mountain face.

**HIJAB ROW IN PONDY SCHOOL**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pondicherry, Feb 8:** The Puducherry government's Directorate of School Education has asked the head of a government school in Ariyankuppam here to enquire into the incident of alleged objection by a teacher to a Muslim girl wearing hijab while attending classes.

A spokesperson of the Directorate told PTI Tuesday that complaints were received from student outfits and other organisations to the teacher objecting to the student wearing hijab while attending the class.

"We want to know what has actually happened and further course of action would be decided after re-

ceiving a report from the school," the spokesperson said.

The Students Federation of India's Pondicherry president Swaminathan said the girl had been attending classes wearing hijab for the last three years.

"Why is there objection now to the girl wearing hijab," Swaminathan asked. He would present a memorandum to the Chief Minister on Wednesday seeking action against the teacher for objecting to the student.

Swaminathan said that there were also complaints that some schools in Veerampattinam, Embalam and Tirukanoor were encouraging 'drills' similar to the ones conducted in RSS programmes.

**Delhi: Fake visa racket busted, 225 passports recovered**



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested six people who were involved in the procurement and arrangement of fake visa documents and preparation of fake visas of different countries, especially European countries, UK, France, Canada and Spain, an official said here Tuesday.

The accused were identified as Sanjeev Kumar, a resident of Jalandhar, Punjab, Lakhvinder Singh, a resident of Rajpur, Punjab, Rajveer Singh, Anil Paul, Dushyant and Rajkumar; all residents of Delhi.

Special Cell DCP, Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said for the past few months a team from the Special Cell was working on the identification of sleeper cells and operatives, who indulge in anti-national activities, having connections with different banned Sikh terror outfits i.e. SFJ, KCF etc., and who may escape from India after committing any such terror activity. In addition to working on different social media platforms, manual sources were also deployed in Delhi-NCR and Punjab. On February 4, specific information was received that one Sanjeev Kumar of such a syndicate will meet his contacts in Janakpuri Institutional area near Gas Godam, New Delhi.

**Senior citizens, Cov-hit people to cast vote at home**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Imphal, Feb 8:** For the first time in India, a section of voters including senior citizens, Covid-19 affected individuals, and persons with disabilities would be allowed to cast their vote through the postal ballot at the homes for the two-phased elections to the Manipur assembly, February 27 and March 3, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sushil Chandra said Tuesday.

The CEC said that senior citizens, Covid-19 suspects or affected individuals, and persons with disabilities would cast their vote through the Postal ballot at their homes in presence of the representative of the concerned candidate, micro



observers, booth level officials (BLO).

"This new initiative at the door step of the voters would be done by following the total secrecy and transparency. Entire

process would be video-graphed," Chandra told the media. The CEC said that the postal ballot facility is an optional service and it would ensure total secrecy.

Regarding service voters, the CEC said that an Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System had been instituted and 21,935 service voters, who are associated with the election process, have been mapped in Manipur and they can avail the scope.

The CEC expressed pleasure that Manipur has 749 centenarian voters with Senapati district having the maximum number of 110 centenarian electors and directed the Chief Electoral Officer and District Election Officers to felicitate such centenarian voters who can act as role models for the youngsters.

**LIC Housing Finance Ltd.**  
IPICOL House, 6th Floor, Annex Building, Janpath, Bhubaneswar - 751022

Appendix - IV [Rule 8(1)]

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Immovable Property/ies)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Loanees(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of demand notice. The Loanees(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Loanees(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 9 of the said Rules, on the date mentioned below. The Loanees(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD. for the amount mentioned below with interest thereon.

Name & Address of Loanees(s)/Co-Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Loan Account No.	Description of the Immovable Property/ies	Demand/Possession Notice Date	Amount Outstanding
<b>Loanee: Mr. Nityananda Mohanty (Primary Applicant)</b> , at Vill: Mundama, Mouza: Hosanpur, Khata No.: 45, Tahasil: Jajpur, Vill: Khosalpur, Jajpur Road, Dist.: Jajpur, Odisha-758052, India, Bounded by East: Plot No.: 235/2059, West: Radhasyam Bhuyan, Madan Bhuyan, North: Gokulnanda Mohanty, Kishor Mohanty, Jaya Chandra Mohanty, South: Govt. Road.	All that part and parcel of property being Plot No.: 234, Mouza: Hosanpur, Khata No.: 45, Tahasil: Jajpur, Vill: Khosalpur, Jajpur Road, Dist.: Jajpur, Odisha-758052, India, Bounded by East: Plot No.: 235/2059, West: Radhasyam Bhuyan, Madan Bhuyan, North: Gokulnanda Mohanty, Kishor Mohanty, Jaya Chandra Mohanty, South: Govt. Road.	21.07.2021 / 04.02.2022	₹40,16,317.24 + interest thereon

**Date: 08.02.2022, Place: Bhubaneswar** **Authorised Officer, LIC Housing Finance Ltd. Bhubaneswar**

# TN Assembly again adopts anti-NEET Bill

**STALIN APPARENTLY SLAMMED THE GOVERNOR FOR RETURNING THE BILL AND SAID BY SENDING IT BACK, THE RIGHT OF TAMIL NADU AND THE ASSEMBLY'S SOVEREIGNTY HAVE BEEN QUESTIONED**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Feb 8:** The Tamil Nadu Assembly Tuesday adopted again, the anti-NEET Bill, returned days ago to the government by Governor RN Ravi and the ruling DMK and principal opposition AIADMK reaffirmed their opposition to the test based on the Dravidian ideology. Chief Minister MK Stalin labelled NEET a killer exam and said he believed that the Governor would forward without any delay the Bill re-adopted, now to the President for his assent. The Bill was passed followed discussions that stretched to 3 hours and the test was yet again dismissed by Stalin as one that went against the principles of Constitution including social jus-



and equality. As per the Constitution, the action of Ravi in sending back the Bill to the Assembly was not a correct decision, the government said. The CM targeted the governor on the return of the Bill and said it raised questions over Centre-state relations. He wondered if the action of the governor in sending back the Bill that was enacted based on a policy decision and which was passed by a duly elected government, did not go against the principle of democracy. He said the governor was only an appointee, apparently pointing to the supremacy of a duly elected government. If this was the case, believing whom would the people vote, based on what belief would people vote he asked.

**It is the Constitutional duty of the Governor to forward it to the President. I think and expect the Governor to do that duty hereafter at least**

MK STALIN | CHIEF MINISTER, TAMIL NADU

Citing the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-state relations, he said the governor should forward a Bill, if it contradicted a law passed by Parliament, to the President immediately for his assent if advised by the state cabinet. The governor must abide by the advice of the council of ministers, he said. The TN Admission to Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill was passed September

13, 2021 by the Assembly. On Tuesday, it was adopted amid thumping of desks and Speaker M Appavu announced that it has been adopted unanimously. The Speaker said the Bill would be sent to Raj Bhavan today to forward it to the Centre to get Presidential assent. Stalin implied DMK's long standing opposition to the institution of governor by citing a remark made in 1967 by party founder and late Chief Minister, CN Annadurai. "I believe that our governor will not create such a situation. He expressed confidence that Ravi would forward the Bill to the President without any delay." Stalin apparently slammed the governor for returning the Bill and said by sending it back, the right of Tamil Nadu and the Assembly's sovereignty have been questioned. It was an attack on the state's autonomy and the doctrine of cooperative federalism has been turned topsy-turvy and that is a matter of grievance and concern, he said. Earlier, the BJP led by its floor leader Nainar Nagenthiran staged a walkout raising its objection to the move. The resolution for the passage of the Bill was piloted by Stalin. The Chief Minister, referring to the communicate of the governor on the return of the Bill February 1, said the reasons adduced by him were not correct.

# Electioneering ends for 1st phase of polling in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Feb 8:** Electioneering ended Tuesday evening for the first phase of assembly polls in western Uttar Pradesh after a busy day during which the ruling BJP and the main opposition Samajwadi Party released their manifestoes. Polling will take place for 58 assembly constituencies spread across 11 districts, out of the 403 seats in the state, on Thursday. Under Election Commission guidelines, campaigning has to end 48 hours before the close of polls for each phase. The canvassing for the first phase remained confined to the virtual medium due to a ban on road shows and physical rallies in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Addressing a virtual rally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched in for a double-engine government for fast-paced development while attacking the Samajwadi Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) combine. The rally aimed at voters in Rampur, Budaun and Sambhal district, which will go to the polls in the second phase. Union Home Minister Amit Shah tried to put the spotlight back on alleged "exodus" of Hindus from Kairana before 2017. He held door-to-door campaigning in Mathura.



Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav claimed that people have made up their mind to vote out the BJP from power. The SP-RLD alliance has centred their electioneering on farmers' issues and attacked UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over poll promises. BSP chief Mayawati, who started campaigning late, reminded people of her government's track record on law and order in the past. The Congress under the leadership of its general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has generated interest as seen in road shows and door-to-door campaigning by her. Though the main contest is believed to be between the BJP and the SP-RLD, the BSP too has its influence on some seats in the first phase. The polling on the 58 seats, of which nine are reserved, will be held between 7 am and 6 pm Thursday.

# SKM appeals to 'punish & defeat BJP'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Meerut, Feb 8:** In its first appeal ahead of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) has asked farmers of the state and the neighbouring Uttarakhand to "punish the BJP and ensure the ruling party's defeat" in the election. Senior members of SKM also issued a letter for farmers and said that the Centre had promised to withdraw the cases registered against them, but that was yet to be fulfilled. The SKM's letter stated: "My dear farmer, I have never met you. But this time my reputation is in your hands. You must have heard of the year-long protest of farmers in which over 700 brothers lost



their lives, you must have heard about farmers being mowed by BJP minister Ajay Mishra's son in Kheri. Four of our brothers lost their lives in that incident and the BJP government, rather than arresting the accused, tried to defend them."

It further said that the government "subjected farmers to tear gas and water cannons and used batons on them". "The farmers were framed in fake cases, and called terrorists and anti-nationals. This party only listens to one language -- vote, seat

and rule. Let's punish BJP and throw them out of power. BJP had manipulated farmers in 2017 and after coming to power, they turned away from all their promises." Meanwhile, BKU leader Rakesh Tikait has warned those trying to "create a rift between Hindus and Muslims", and said: "Whoever tries to play the match of Jinnah or Hindu-Muslim in Muzaffarnagar or west Uttar Pradesh, I will set him right." Tikait further said that the BJP and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister are "conspiring to defame one particular caste to win the election". "We are taking the mission Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand forward. We will hold press conferences in each district and will tell the voters about the farm agitation," he added.

# It's MY vs MY in UP polls

**WHILE THE SP LARGELY BANKS ON ITS MUSLIM-YADAV SUPPORT BASE, THE BJP IS TRYING TO COUNTER IT WITH THE MODI-YOGI COMBO**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Feb 8:** It's MY vs MY in Uttar Pradesh. While the SP largely banks on its Muslim-Yadav support base, the BJP is trying to counter it with the Modi-Yogi combo in the state Assembly polls. Since days of Mulayam Singh Yadav, the Samajwadi Party (SP) has enjoyed a powerful electoral support base among Muslims and Yadavs, who constitute around 20 per cent and 10 per cent population of the state, respectively. His son Akhilesh Yadav, who is solely managing the poll shows for his party this time, inherited this advantage. He, however, has made an attempt to expand his base by giving tickets to non-Yadav Other Backward Castes. Flocking of leaders like OP Rajbhar, Swami Prasad Maurya and Dara Singh Chauhan and the alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Jayant Chaudhary has further given a boost to his efforts to dethrone the BJP. Meanwhile, several BJP leaders told PTI that setting the narrative around Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is helping them offset the anti-incumbency against the state government. In election speeches of all BJP leaders, one can find reference to work done by the PM for the country and Adityanath in UP. Publicity material of the saffron party is largely themed around the duo. Even the prime minister praises Adityanath for ending the mafia raj of the previous Samajwadi Party government led by Akhilesh Yadav.



Yogi too never forgets to highlight bold decisions of the Modi government such as doing away with the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and paving way for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, in addition to relief provided to the poor during the coronavirus pandemic. The BJP's poll narrative surrounding Modi-Yogi can be noticed clearly when one talks to their leaders and supporters. Amethi BJP leader Rajesh Agrahi told PTI, Modi-Yogi is a success chant among people. Rahul Gandhi or Priyanka Gandhi have no takers like in the past but the mention of the work done by Modi and Adityanath in the state help them establish instant rapport with people during campaigning, Agrahi said. BJP's Amethi and Sultanpur leaders Durgesh Tripathi and RA Verma echoed similar views. Verma told PTI that some of the anti-incumbency faced by the BJP MLA in Sultanpur has been neu-

tralised by the Modi-Yogi factor. Coordinator of the BJP's panchayat cell in Gorakhpur, Ajay Tiwari, said the BJP will get the benefit of development work done by the PM and the CM in the state. BJP leaders are using the narrative in Rae Bareilly, where the party is aiming at a clean sweep on five seats in the parliamentary constituency of Congress president Sonia Gandhi. Two Congress MLAs from Rae Bareilly and Mahachandrapur have defected to the saffron camp to give a greater thrust to the BJP's aim to make Rae Bareilly "Congress-mukt" this time. It's not only the leaders, people supporting the BJP are also attracted by the Modi and Yogi factor. Jang Bahadur Singh, a native of Gauriganj in Amethi district, said people here have strong faith in the leadership of Modi and Yogi. Binod Kumar Shukla and Pitardeen Shukla of the neighbouring Madhavpur village in Amethi echoed similar views.

# SL minister wants TN fishermen to attend Kachchatheevu feast

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Colombo, Feb 8:** Sri Lanka's Fisheries Minister Douglas Devananda wants fishermen from Tamil Nadu to attend the annual church feast at the Kachchatheevu Island, adding that he would speak to the government and make arrangements to accommodate the Indian devotees to attend the feast. In the backdrop of ongoing strained relationship between the Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen, the Fisheries Minister is on the opinion that it would be good to allow the fishermen from both parties to join the church feast, Devananda's media spokesman Nelson Edirisinghe told IANS. This would be a good meeting point for the both parties, he said. Fishermen from northern Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu have been accusing each other for poaching in their territories. Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, Sri Lankan health authorities, the Catholic Church and government officials January 30 decided to have the church feast without Indian devotees. The feast March 11-12 is scheduled to be conducted with the participation of only 500 Sri Lankan devotees from the two Northern Sri Lankan Roman Catholic dioceses, Jaffna and Manner. However Indian pilgrims and fisheries bodies have protested against Sri Lanka's decision and on Friday Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin had requested External

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to urge the island's government to enable the participation of the devotees in the annual feast of St Anthony's Church in Kachchatheevu. In a letter to Jaishankar, Stalin requested the Centre to intervene in the issue. The news of denial by Sri Lankan authorities has caused deep disappointment among the fishermen community in the state. I am sure that your efforts will ensure good relations between the people of both countries. The government of Tamil Nadu has been facilitating the safe journey of fishermen devotees of Tamil Nadu who wish to participate in the Festival. It has come to my notice that fishermen devotees of Tamil Nadu are not allowed to participate in the annual festival this year, citing various reasons by the Sri Lankan authorities, he added. Last year, the feast in the island located half a nautical mile from the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line was cancelled due to Covid. The feast is an annual meeting place for fishermen from both countries. Kachchatheevu an uninhabited island was a disputed territory claimed by India until it was ratified by UN Law of the Sea conference in 1976, where maritime boundaries and Exclusive Economic Zones of India, Sri Lanka and Maldives were demarcated and agreed to by all three countries.



Vehicles to be used for election duty purposes stand parked at Police Line in Meerut, Tuesday

# In a first, TN couple hosts Metaverse marriage reception

**A MUSICAL CONCERT WAS HELD ON METAVERSE FROM CHENNAI AND THE EVENT SAW ABOUT 200 GUESTS WHO ATTENDED THE RECEPTION RECEIVE FOOD AT THEIR HOMES**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Feb 8:** The pandemic induced apprehension, ingenuity and his flair for technological innovation, drove the 25-year-old Dinesh SP, project associate in IIT Madras, and his bride Janaganandhini Ramasamy, to host their wedding reception on Metaverse platform, earning the spontaneous appreciation of rel-

atives, friends and gaining a worldwide audience. The reception held at Sivalingapuram village of Anchetti taluk in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri district, shot the newly wedded couple to fame. Dinesh, who is into Blockchain, NFTs and Crypto, says his is the first Metaverse marriage in Asia. "I got married in February 2022. I had planned to conduct my reception on Metaverse platform February 6, due to the pandemic which had restricted the guests," he says. Hogwarts theme from Harry Potter was the choice the couple made for their reception. A musical concert was held on Metaverse from Chennai and the event saw about 200 guests who attended the reception receive food at their homes. "The unique Metaverse marriage reception was the first to be held in Asia and it was an instant hit among the people," claims Vinesh Selvaraj, CEO of TardiVerse, the Sriperumbudur based



Information Technology firm, which designed the virtual platform for Dinesh and Janaganandhini. "It took our 12-member team nearly a month from January 3 to complete the project," Vignesh told PTI. He says the Metaverse will be the 3.0 technology wielding tremendous influence on people. The unique event had fetched Vignesh 60 orders from various parts of India and abroad and cur-

rently he is readying to host the Valentine's Day celebrations this February 14 on Metaverse platform in Chennai. "Lovers could exchange gifts on this platform," he adds. A virtual world where people can interact, hold meetings, buy land, and do lot more, Metaverse, which has been around for a long time, has had huge success in science fiction movies. The Matrix, the story of a computer programmer, and Sword

The reception held at Sivalingapuram village of Anchetti taluk in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri district, shot the newly wedded couple to fame Art Online, a popular anime series, flex this technology. Back home, in November last year, popular actor Kamal Haasan unveiled his plans of a new virtual avatar to become the first actor to enter the game-based Metaverse. TardiVerse created the avatars of the guests, the bride and the groom besides that of bride's late father who passed away last April. "We created a 3D avatar of his father-in-law as sought by Dinesh," says Vignesh who sees large scope for similar events in India and abroad. The reception was held also with the support of CoinSwitch Kuber, a crypto exchange.





of the day quote

Maharashtra has never bowed before the authority of Delhi and will never do so

The world knows that the Emergency was imposed and a decision was taken. After that, our government fell.

Everyone knows that the Emergency was imposed, why it was imposed and what happened during the Emergency. Will you keep telling the shortcomings (of the previous governments) or make your own history? If you talk about development, then it is understandable

Hatred for Muslims has been completely mainstreamed and normalised in India today. We are no longer a nation that celebrates our diversity, we want to punish and exclude people for it

SHORT TAKES

Naxals trigger IED blast in Bijapur

Bijapur: Four personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were injured Tuesday in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast triggered by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said.

Minor tribal girl gangraped, 3 held

Bhopal: Three days after a 17-year-old tribal girl was abducted and gangraped in Madhya Pradesh, the state Police claimed to have arrested three persons involved in the case.

Haryana Budget session from Mar 2

Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar Tuesday said the budget session of the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) will begin from March 2.

Shimla Development Plan draft launched

Shimla: After 40 years of the implementation of the Town and Country Planning Act, Himachal Pradesh Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj Tuesday launched the draft of Shimla Development Plan.

3 more held in WB post-poll violence

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Tuesday said that they have arrested three accused in an ongoing investigation in connection with post-poll violence in West Bengal.



Aggressive politics started in the country ever since the BJP came to power

FB, INSTA BLOCK HANDLES OF CHINAR CORPS

Facebook and Instagram have blocked the handles of Chinar Corps, the Indian Army's strategically located formation in the Kashmir valley, for over a week now and have not responded to the official communication in this regard, officials said



Omicron is dominant Covid variant in country

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 8: Omicron variant is the dominant variant in the country presently and the current surge of Covid-19 cases in the country is showing a sustained declining trend since January 21, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya informed the Rajya Sabha Tuesday.

With the reporting of Omicron, a highly mutated variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus and its classification as a Variant of Concern (VoC) by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Union Ministry of Health revised its 'Guidelines for international arrivals', Mandaviya said in a written reply.

"Omicron variant is the dominant variant in the country presently. The current surge of Covid-19 cases in the country is showing a sustained declining trend since January 21, 2022," he said.

Following a risk based approach, provisions for mandatory pre-departure and post arrival RT-PCR testing on day 8th of arrival and a mandatory home quarantine for 7 days have been made in the present guidelines for all international travellers to India.

The Ministry of Health continues to provide technical guidance for managing various aspects of Covid-19 including containment and surveillance, testing, clinical management protocols, post-Covid sequale, etc., the minister said.



The clinical management protocols have also been disseminated under the Ministry of Health's Center of Excellence initiative for all states in collaboration with AIIMS, Delhi and Indian Medical Association. Besides regular review meetings at the level of Union Health Minister with all relevant stakeholders including subject experts, review meetings with states and UTs through video conferencing have been conducted regularly to review preparedness and response measures to address Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

States and UTs have been advised to undertake several activities which include strict monitoring of International travellers in the community, contact tracing of positive individuals and follow up for 14 days, genome sequencing of positive samples through INSACOG Labs in a prompt manner, continued monitoring of areas where

'5.33L deaths so far'

New Delhi: Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Tuesday said there has been 5.33 lakh deaths so far from the Covid-19 pandemic in the country. He also informed that insurance claims worth Rs 808 crore have been paid under the 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package' (PMGKP) insurance scheme, launched March 30, 2020, to families of 1,616 healthcare workers who died while being involved in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

cluster of positive cases emerge and further strengthening of Covid-19 testing infrastructure.

SL Navy arrests 16 Indian fishermen



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 8: While Sri Lanka has been assuring India that they would not be troubling the Indian fishermen, the Tamil Nadu 'Q' branch police has said that 16 Indian fishermen from Rameswaram were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy at Delft island in the early hours of Tuesday.

According to a statement of the 'Q' branch police of Tamil Nadu, 16 fishermen and three boats were taken into custody by the Sri Lankan Navy at 2 a.m.. The Sri Lankan Navy, according to the 'Q' branch had apprehended the fishermen from Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu at the Delft Island or Neduntheevu in Northern Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan Navy has slapped charges of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) on the Indian fishermen, according to sources in the police.

Sixty-three Indian Fishermen from Tamil Nadu were arrested and remanded to judicial custody by the Sri Lankan Navy in December 2021, and 53 of these fishermen are still in an isolation centre of the Sri Lankan government after being released from prison.

The Sri Lankan Fisheries department has also advertised in newspapers in the Island nation on the auction of the Indian fishing boats seized some time back by the Sri Lankan authorities.

NEET-PG-22

Urge govt to extend internship deadline, SC asks aspirants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: The Supreme Court Tuesday asked the MBBS students seeking extending one-year internship deadline beyond May 31, criteria for aspirants for National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-PG-22, to make a representation to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant, and Vikram Nath said that looking at the hardship faced by the aspirants, the MoHFW may decide on the representation within one week from the date of its submission.

"Since the issue which has been raised by the petitioners require some element of determining of facts as well as aspects of policy, we are of the view that the ends of justice will be met by permitting the petitioners to submit a representation to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, setting out the nature of hardship, which is being faced by the students placed similarly to the petitioners", the bench said. It added, "We, therefore, request that the representation be considered expeditiously within one week of its submission".

The bench said that it is not expressing any opinion on the issue at this stage. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the MBBS Students, said that the



examination has been extended but there is one important criterion that needs to be looked into.

The top court noted that the date of NEET-PG-22, which was earlier scheduled to be held in March, has now been extended. On February 4, the top court had said it would hear the plea filed by MBBS students seeking postponement of the NEET scheduled to be held March 12 for admissions to post-graduate medical courses. Several hundred MBBS graduates, whose internship got halted due to their duty in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic, would be rendered ineligible from appearing in the NEET-PG test due to lack of mandatory internship duty that too without their fault, the plea said while seeking deferment of the test.

The apex court, January 7, had paved the way for starting the stalled NEET-PG 2021 counselling process based on the existing 27 per cent OBC and 10 per cent EWS reservations in the All India Quota seats, saying there is an "urgent need" to begin the admission process.

PIL filed in Calcutta HC for removal of WB Guv

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Feb 8: In an interesting development, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the Calcutta High Court for the removal of the governor from his unconstitutional post. The PIL is likely to come up for hearing on Friday before Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava.

The petition filed by lawyer Rama Prasad Sarkar said that Governor Jagdeep Dhankahr is going beyond the purview of the Constitution and is indulging in unconstitutional activities. According to some senior lawyers, this is perhaps the first case in Calcutta High Court when a petition has been filed for the removal of the governor. The governor and the state government have always been in

conflict with each other. There are several occasions when governor Jagdeep Dhankahr has gone against the state's decisions and criticised them publicly. The conflict went to such an extent that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to the President and the Prime Minister asking them for the removal of the governor. Recently during the Lok Sabha session, Trinamool Congress complained against the governor and asked for his removal. According to Sarkar, the governor has been unconstitutionally criticising the state government and its working as the spokesperson of a political party. Though the governor is indirectly involved in the case, he has not been made a party to the case. Notices have already been served to other stakeholders in the case.

Over 17K farmers committed suicide in 3 yrs: Govt

New Delhi: Over 17,000 farmers in different parts of the country committed suicide between 2018 and 2020, the Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra said the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) compiles statistics on accidental deaths and suicides from states and Union Territories and publishes the same annually as 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ADSI) report. According to the ADSI report, 5,763 farmers or cultivators committed suicide in 2018, while another 5,957 killed themselves in 2019. The report said 5,579 farmers or cultivators committed suicide in 2020.



Students attend class at the Paray Sikhshalay, an outdoor learning initiative started by the West Bengal Government following all Covid-19 protocols in Nadia

COMBATING TOBACCO MENACE

Awareness, higher taxes, stronger laws needed: Experts

PRESENTLY DIFFERENT KINDS OF CANCER ARE TAKING INTO THEIR GRIP AROUND 14 LAKH INDIANS, KILLING 8 LAKH EVERY YEAR, AND AS MANY AS 27 PER CENT ARE ATTRIBUTED TO TOBACCO USE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: A three-pronged strategy - public awareness, stronger legislation and higher taxes to make tobacco inaccessible to common

man - is needed for tobacco control and this keep cancer at bay, medical experts have suggested.

This is needed as tobacco-induced cancer is emerging as a major public health threat in the country, they said.

Leading health experts took part in a webinar organised on the World Cancer Day (February 4), and expressed their concern over the situation.

A senior doctor from AIIMS, lamented that women were "increasingly taking up tobacco consumption", viewing it as a "fashion symbol".

"Top medical experts have suggested a three-pronged tobacco control strategy - public awareness, strengthening legislation and hiking taxes to make tobacco inaccessible to common man especially kids - to keep the deadly disease at bay," the organisers said



in a statement Tuesday.

Ocologist and former head, National Cancer Institute Dr G K Rath; Dr Alok Thakar, Dr Rambha Pandey and Dr Rakesh Garg, leading cancer experts from AIIMS, New Delhi and Dr Rahul Bhargava, Principal Director, hematology, Fortis Hospital, Gurgaon shared their views over rising tobacco-induced cancer;

These experts also felt that passage of the proposed amendments for a stricter tobacco-control law, COTPA (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act), will help reduce the menace.

"Tobacco products are the major contributors for various cancers and other diseases. In India, tobacco-related cancers contribute nearly half of the total cancers in males

According to the health experts, cancers caused by tobacco, can affect lungs, mouth, pharynx (upper throat), nose and sinuses, larynx (voice box), oesophagus (food pipe), liver, pancreas, stomach, kidney, ovary, bladder, cervix, and some types of Leukemia

and one-fifth in females," Dr G K Rath, was quoted as saying in the statement.

He also expressed displeasure that while tobacco firms were targeting through various marketing strategies to children as young as ten

years old, and alleged that few Bollywood celebrities were "engaged in surrogate advertisements of health hazardous items like gutka". "This is very unfortunate as they are impacting the impressionable minds of young children to take up this deadly habit," he said at the event hosted by journalist Arun Anand. It is important to note that in the last 15 years, cancer has become one of the top causes of mortality and morbidity in India, the statement said.

This is likely to increase in India which is the second leading consumer of tobacco products. As India celebrates its 75th year of Independence as a year-long 'Amrit Mahotsav' it is time to work towards getting freedom from tobacco and free the citizens, especially youth, from these poisonous and cancer causing addictive products, doctors said.

# international



Anti-Iran sanctions re-imposed by the former US administration should be lifted in order to reach a good agreement in the ongoing Vienna nuclear talks

## STUDY REVELATION

People who have had COVID-19 are at increased risk of developing cardiovascular complications within the first month to a year after infection, according to a study conducted in the US



## of the day quote

We cannot delay support for small merchants and self-employed people even for a moment

I am behind Prime Minister Scott Morrison in the lead-up to the election, which is expected to be held in the first half of this year

US arms sales to Taiwan... Seriously undermine China's sovereignty and security interests, and seriously damage China-US relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait

US arms sales to Taiwan... Seriously undermine China's sovereignty and security interests, and seriously damage China-US relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait

# Over 2,400 women raped in Pak's Punjab province in 6 months

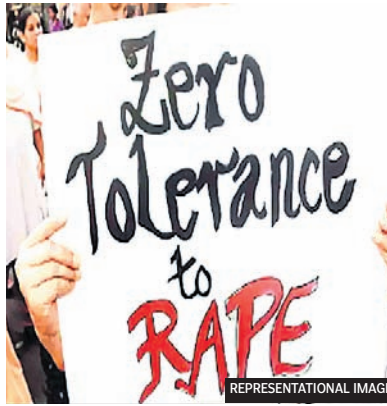
Lahore, Feb 8: A total of 2,439 women were raped and 90 killed in the name of "family honour" during the last six months in the Punjab province of Pakistan, according to the data provided by the Punjab Information Commission.

In Lahore, the capital of the Punjab province with a population of 110 million, 400 women were raped and over 2,300 kidnapped during this period, the data said. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)'s recent report, in Pakistan, at least 11 rape cases are reported daily with over 22,000 such incidents reported to police in the last six years (2015-21).

The report states that society gives undue advantage to perpetrators by blaming victims. Instead of having a drop in the number of cases, there has been a sharp rise with an overall less than 1 per cent conviction rate.

"Only 77 accused of the 22,000 cases were found to be convicted and the conviction rate is around 0.3 per cent," the report said. "Sadly, rape culture is predominant in Pakistan - one that blames the victims of sexual assault and frames all men as naturally violent. Many are working to try to change this discourse, but it is an uphill battle," Nida Kirmani, a professor at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) was quoted as saying in the report.

Last week, a man killed his married sister who was gangraped in the Sargodha district, some 200 kilometres from Lahore. The 28-year-old victim, a mother of five children, was raped by four suspects in a neighbourhood where she worked as domestic help. The alleged killer told the police that he shot dead her sister for dishonouring the



Sadly, rape culture is predominant in Pakistan - one that blames the victims of sexual assault and frames all men as naturally violent. Many are working to try to change this discourse, but it is an uphill battle

family honour. Pakistan is one of the highest numbers of documented and estimated honour killings per capita in the world. An honour killing is the homicide of a member of a family or social group

by other members, due to the belief the victim has brought dishonour upon the family or community. The death of the victim is viewed as a way to restore the reputation and honour of the family.

Pakistani social media star Qandeel Baloch was strangled to death in 2016 by her brother who was upset by pictures she had uploaded to social media.

Often dubbed the Kim Kardashian of Pakistan, Baloch, 26, had hundreds of thousands of followers on social media. She posted images and videos of herself twerking and singing, breaking strict taboos in socially conservative Pakistan.

The shocking murder of Baloch by her brother had turned the spotlight on the epidemic of so-called 'honour killings' and sparked a

fresh push to close loopholes allowing the killers to walk free. The long-awaited legislation was finally passed three months later in a move cautiously hailed by women's rights activists.

But years on, activists say honour killings are still occurring at an alarming pace in Pakistan. According to the World Economic Forum, Pakistan is one of the worst countries in the world in terms of gender parity. Women hold fewer than 7 per cent of managerial positions.

Early marriage remains a serious issue in Pakistan, with 21 per cent of girls in the country marrying before the age of 18, and 3 per cent marrying before 15. More than five million primary school-age children in Pakistan are not in school, most of them are girls, according to Human Rights Watch.

## UKRAINE CRISIS

# Macron calls for calm

The US and the European Union have threatened Russia with sanctions if it attacks Ukraine

REUTERS

Kyiv, Feb 8: French President Emmanuel Macron, the first leader of a major Western power to meet Vladimir Putin since Russia massed troops near Ukraine, said Tuesday he believed steps can be taken to de-escalate the crisis and called on all sides to stay calm.

Macron, who in contrast to the US and British leaders, has played down the likelihood that Russia may soon invade its neighbour, shuttled from Moscow to Kyiv on Tuesday in a high-profile bid to act as a mediator.

The French President had no breakthroughs to announce - his office rowed back on Tuesday after an official said overnight that Putin had promised him Russia would not stage military manoeuvres near Ukraine for the time being.

But Macron said he thought his talks had helped prevent the crisis from escalating further. Both Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy had told him they were committed to the principles of a 2014 peace agreement, he said, adding that this deal, known as the Minsk accords, offered a path to resolving their ongoing disputes.

"This shared determination is the only way allowing us to create peace, the only way to create a viable political solution," Macron told a joint news conference with Zelenskiy. "Calm ... is essential from all parties in words and in deeds," Macron said, praising Zelenskiy for "the sangfroid that you are showing, and which the Ukrainian people are showing, in the face of military pressure on your borders and on your country".

Zelenskiy, for his part, made clear he was sceptical of any assurances Macron may have received from Putin. "I do not really trust words, I believe that every politician can be transparent by taking concrete steps," the Ukrainian leader said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Macron defended the outcome of his talks in Moscow on Monday, which brought no major breakthrough, telling reporters he had never expected "for one second" that Putin would make concessions.

Western countries led by the United States fear Russia is preparing to invade Ukraine. Moscow says it is planning no invasion but could take unspecified "military-technical measures" unless a number of security demands are met, including a promise from NATO never to admit Kyiv.

The United States and the European Union have threatened Russia with sanctions if it attacks Ukraine. Moscow, still Europe's biggest energy supplier despite already being under sanctions since seizing Ukraine's Crimean peninsula in 2014, has largely dismissed new sanctions as an empty threat.

U.S. President Joe Biden warned on Monday that if Russia invades Ukraine, "there will be no longer Nord Stream 2", referring to a newly built, as yet unopened gas pipeline to Germany. He did not specify how he would halt it.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, and French President Emmanuel Macron greet each other prior to their talks in Kyiv, Ukraine

# PAYING RESPECT



Accompanied by Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba, right, Czech, Slovak and Austrian foreign ministers Jan Lipavsky, Ivan Korcok, third right, and Alexander Schallenberg, second right, pay respect at the Memorial Wall of Fallen Defenders of Ukraine in Russian-Ukrainian War in Kyiv, Ukraine

# US, Russia clash over impact of UN sanctions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

United Nations, Feb 8: The United States and its allies clashed with Russia and China in the UN Security Council on Monday over the usefulness and impact of UN sanctions, which are currently imposed on countries from North Korea to Yemen and Congo as well as the al-Qaida and Islamic State extremist groups and their affiliates and supporters.

Russia, which holds the council presidency this meeting and chose the topic - preventing humanitarian and unintended consequences of sanctions - also lashed out at unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States, European Union and other countries and groups.

UN political chief Rosemary DiCarlo told the council there are 14 UN sanctions regimes: As examples, in Libya, Mali, South Sudan and Yemen they support conflict resolution; in Guinea Bissau they aim



AP PHOTO

to deter unconstitutional changes of government; in Central African Republic, Congo and Somalia they curb the illicit exploitation of natural resources that fund armed groups; in North Korea, they target proliferation activities; and they constrain Islamic State and al-Qaida terrorist threats.

DiCarlo said UN sanctions are no longer "the blunt instrument they once were." Since the 1990s, they have undergone changes to minimize possible adverse consequences on civilians and third countries, and the Security Council has included and provided humanitarian exemptions in most sanctions regimes, she said.

Russia's deputy UN ambassador

The Security Council needs to take greater heed of what the authorities of states under sanctions think and be more realistic in setting benchmarks to lift them to make sure they don't turn into a mission impossible

Dmitry Polyansky | RUSSIA'S DEPUTY UN AMBASSADOR

dor Dmitry Polyansky, who chaired the meeting, said many sanctions regimes interfere with plans for state-building and economic development, pointing to Central African Republic and Sudan and calling the measures on Guinea Bissau "anachronistic."

"The Security Council needs to take greater heed of what the authorities of states under sanctions think and be more realistic in setting benchmarks to lift them to make sure they don't turn into a mission impossible," he said.

## SHORT TAKES

### UK PM Johnson reshuffles Cabinet

London: Embattled British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, under pressure to resign over parties in Downing Street during lockdown, Tuesday reshuffled his Cabinet and appointed Jacob Rees-Mogg as the minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency. Rees-Mogg, 52, currently leader of the House of Commons, will be based in the Cabinet Office. Mark Spencer, the current Chief Whip, will replace Rees Mogg as the Leader of Commons.

### Cyclone toll rises

Antananarivo: A total of 20 deaths were recorded in Madagascar by the Office of Risk and Disaster Management, following the passage of intense tropical cyclone Batsirai last Saturday and Sunday. The multi-sectoral aerial assessment of the damage left by cyclone Batsirai began Monday in Madagascar. According to the latest estimation, more than 69,000 people have been displaced after the cyclone swept the country, Xinhua news agency reported.

### One dead

Washington: One person was killed and another was wounded during a shooting at a grocery store in Washington state, authorities said. The shooting incident inside a Fred Meyer grocery store in the southeastern Washington city of Richland was reported at 11.03 a.m. on Monday, Xinhua news agency quoted the Richland Police Department as saying in a statement. "One person has died and another is in the hospital with injuries. The suspect has been described as a middle aged white male," the statement added.

## MATTER OF CONCERN

# Turtles dying from eating trash show plastics scourge in UAE

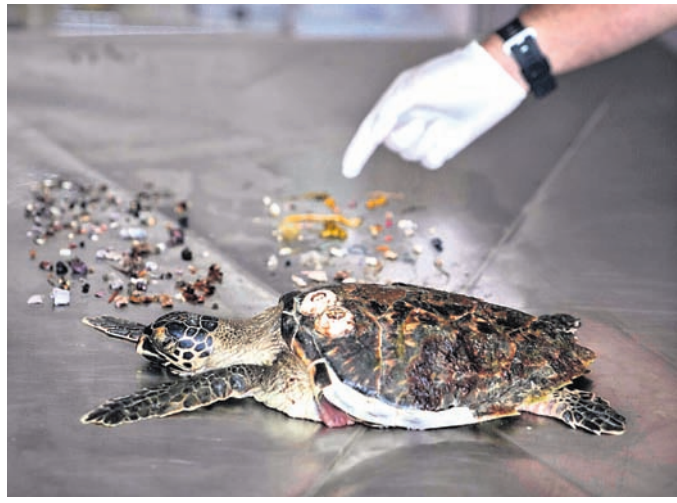
A staggering 75% of all dead green turtles and 57% of all loggerhead turtles in Sharjah had eaten marine debris, including plastic bags, bottle caps, rope and fishing nets

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kalba (UAE), Feb 8: The hawksbill sea turtle lay belly-up on the metal autopsy table, its shell ashen and stomach taut.

A week ago, the adolescent turtle washed up on a beach in Kalba, a city on the east coast of the United Arab Emirates. Once unspoiled, the coast of mangrove trees is now fouled by piles of trash dragged from nearby landfills. Strawn across the shore are plastic bags, packages, bottle caps - and far too often, dead turtles.

At first, Fadi Yaghmour, a marine expert who has examined some 200 turtles for the first research on the subject from the



Middle East, extracted typical fare from the carcass - squid beaks and oysters.

Then, a culprit for the creature's demise became clear: shriveled balloons and plastic foam, some of the last things the turtle ate. "It's probably malnourished," Yaghmour said last week as he worked. Plastic clogs turtles' intestinal tracts, he said, and can cause them to starve.

This turtle is one of 64 retrieved from the shores of Kalba and Khor Fakkan, in the wider emirate of Sharjah, to be analyzed in Yaghmour's lab. His team of researchers have published a new study in the Marine Pollution Bulletin that seeks to

document the damage and danger of the throwaway plastic that has surged in use around the world and in the UAE, along with other marine debris.

When discarded, plastic clogs waterways and chokes animals - not just sea turtles but whales, birds and all sorts of life.

A staggering 75% of all dead green turtles and 57% of all loggerhead turtles in Sharjah had eaten marine debris, including plastic bags, bottle caps, rope and fishing nets, the study found. The only other research from the region, published in 1985, found that none of the studied turtles in the Gulf of Oman had eaten plastic.

# Israel to probe domestic use of Pegasus spyware

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 8: The Israeli government announced it would investigate claims that the police had used spyware created by companies including the NSO Group, a surveillance firm that has drawn global criticism, against its citizens without court order, The New York Times reported.

On Monday, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said the deputy attorney general was "looking quickly into" the claims, while the Public Security Minister Omer Barlev said he would begin an official state inquiry.

The efforts reflect Israel's most significant interventions in the NSO controversy since the Israeli firm began attracting global scrutiny nearly six years ago, the report said. The allegations have caused a brief delay in the cor-

ruption trial of Benjamin Netanyahu, Bennett's predecessor, amid claims that the police illegally hacked the phone of a key trial witness.

Netanyahu's allies have called for the trial to be scrapped entirely. The New York Times reported. The moves reflected the rising concerns about the use of NSO products within Israel, where the company - blacklisted in the US and long a target of criticism outside Israel - was for years spared significant domestic scrutiny because it was not widely seen as a threat to Israeli citizens.

News organisations and watchdogs have exposed how NSO's flagship product, Pegasus, was sold with the permission of the Israeli Defence Ministry to authoritarian governments who used it to hack the phones of foreign activists, lawyers and politicians.

**of the day quote**

Electric is the future and it is imperative that we drive ahead with upskilling and reskilling initiatives for our talent pool, making them industry-ready and create a robust e-mobility ecosystem,

**MARTIN SCHWENK** | MERCEDES-BENZ INDIA MD & CEO

From the government's side, we are committed to reduce regulation, to make sure that the regulation is in tune with times, that the industry feels committed towards investments

**ASHWINI VAISHNAW** | TELECOM MINISTER

Government, on an application made by LIC, permitted LIC to utilise the free reserves of LIC towards increasing its paid-up capital

**BHAGWAT KARAD** | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE



**Electric two-wheeler financing is the biggest growth driver towards mass adoption in the country**

**SOHINDER GILL** | HERO ELECTRIC CEO

**LIVSPACE TURNS UNICORN**

Home interior and renovation platform Livspace has turned unicorn after raising USD 180 million in a funding round led by investment firm KKR at a valuation of over USD 1 billion, the company said Tuesday. Existing investors including Inga Group Investments, Jungle Ventures, Venturi Partners, and Peugeot Investments also participated in the Series F funding round.



## No relaxations will be given to Tesla: Govt

**'CAN'T HAVE SITUATION WHERE MARKET IS INDIA BUT JOBS ARE IN CHINA'**

**Press Trust of India**

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** Making it clear that relaxations will not be provided to US-based electric vehicles major Tesla unless it participates in manufacturing activities in India, Union Minister Krishan Pal Gurjar Tuesday said there cannot be a situation where the market is India but jobs are created in China.

The minister of state for heavy industries also told the Lok Sabha during Question Hour that the company is yet to apply for schemes as per the government's policy.

Last year, the Elon Musk-led company sought a reduction in import duties on electric vehicles (EVs) in India but the Ministry of Heavy Industries asked the firm to start manufacturing its iconic EVs in the country before any tax concessions can be considered.

Gurjar said the government has Production Linked Incentives for automobile and auto components as well as for manufacturing Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) battery. Both schemes are open for domestic as well as foreign entities.

Responding to a query on Tesla,



the minister said "the company wants workers from China and market of India. This is not possible in Modi government... Our government's policy is that if India market is to be used, job opportunities will have to be given to Indians."

The minister's reply came in response to a question by Congress member K Suresh on whether the government would invite Tesla to enter the Indian market and

steps being taken to promote mass production of electric vehicles in the country.

"Want to ask the member if they want India's money to go to China? That company has not applied as per our policy. For that (company), doors of India are open, they can come apply as per policy, set up company give jobs to our people, increase government revenue," the minister said.

"Under Modi government, it cannot happen that jobs are in China while market is India... The government's policy is that if the market is India, then people in India should get jobs," Gurjar said.

He was responding to another member's query about the government's position on exemptions sought by Tesla and some states expressing interest to have the company's manufacturing units.

Last month, Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk said the company is working through a lot of challenges with the government to launch its products in India.

For promotion of EVs, there are schemes and the benefits are that advanced technology will come to India and parts will also be manufactured here. People will get jobs and consumers will get cheaper vehicles, the minister said.

The minister also said recently a round table was organised that saw participation of representatives of several companies and associations like SIAM. All said in one voice that the government has done what it had to and that it was now time for the industries to come forward, he added.

## Will MPC maintain status quo on rates?

*The central bank had last revised the policy rate May 22, 2020, in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting interest rate to a historic low*



**Press Trust of India**

**Mumbai, Feb 8:** The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel began its three-day deliberations Tuesday to decide the next monetary policy in the backdrop of Budget 2022-23, inflationary concerns and evolving geo-political situation.

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to announce the policy resolution Thursday.

The meeting was to start Monday but it was postponed by a day in view of Maharashtra declaring public holiday February 7 to mourn the death of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar.

It is widely anticipated that the MPC is likely to maintain the status quo on the benchmark interest rate or repo rate.

The meeting was to start Monday but it was postponed by a day in view of Maharashtra declaring public holiday February 7 to mourn the death of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar.

**If the RBI maintains status quo in policy rate Thursday, it would be the tenth consecutive time since the rate remains unchanged**

The last MPC held in December 2021 had kept the benchmark interest rate unchanged at 4 per cent and decided to continue with its accommodative stance against the backdrop of concerns over the emergence of the new coronavirus variant Omicron.

The MPC has been tasked by the government to keep inflation in the range of 2-6 per cent.

Citing the massive spike in credit growth during the first half and the steeper fall in deposits and the resultant rise in term money rates, coupled with the record high borrowings, an SBI report has called for a 20 bps increase in reverse repo rate outside the MPC ambit so that the central bank find buyers for the flooding new debt papers.

The budget 2023 has pegged the Centre's gross borrowing at a record ₹14.3 lakh crore and for the FY22 at ₹10.5 lakh crore, lower than ₹13.5 lakh crore this fiscal, while together with the states, the gross borrowing will be ₹23.3 lakh crore and net will be ₹17.8 lakh crore, the report said. The budget seeks to pay back ₹3.1 lakh crore next fiscal, up from ₹2.7 lakh crore this fiscal, it added.

While during the first half of FY22 itself, signs of credit recovery became visible, the latest data for the week to January 14, 2022, shows all banks incremental credit grew by ₹5.46 lakh crore, more than double of ₹2.72 lakh crore in the same period last fiscal, the report said, adding as against this, the incremental deposit growth was only ₹8.6 lakh crore, down from ₹10.5 lakh crore.

**SHORT TAKES**

**MoU between OMC and UBI**

**Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha Mining Corporation Limited has signed an MoU with Union Bank of India, Patia Branch for extending additional facility in its payment gateway system currently in operation since January 1, 2021. Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd is banking with Union Bank of India since 1995. The additional benefits under the payment gateway facility have been extended for the very first time in the history of Union Bank of India for any customer. The MoU was signed by RK Jaglan, GM Govt Business Dept. Union Bank of India and Bana Bihari Pani, Chief General Manager (Finance), Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd.

**Cost of state debt soars 41 bps**

**Mumbai:** Ahead of the monetary policy announcement Thursday wherein the MPC is likely to begin liquidity tightening with a marginal reverse repo hike, states Tuesday had to pay a higher price to bond investors as the weighted average cut-off rate jumped by a hefty 41 basis points to 7.24 per cent. In the previous auction of State Development Loans (SDLs) last Tuesday, the cut-off was only 6.83 per cent. However, the weighted average cut-off for the 10-year state debt issuance hit a record 7.29 per cent Tuesday. This is 8 bps higher than 7.21 per cent seen last week and the spread between the 10-year G-secs yield and SDL widened to 48 bps from 38 bps. Tuesday, the 10-year G-secs yield eased to 6.81 per cent compared to 6.83 per cent last week.

**NMDC Q3 profit drops marginally**

**New Delhi:** State-owned NMDC Tuesday reported a marginal 2.8 per cent drop in consolidated profit at ₹2,048.40 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2021 on the back of higher expenses. The company had reported a profit of ₹2,108.05 crore for the year-ago period, NMDC said in a filing to BSE. However, the company's income during the quarter increased to ₹6,026.68 crore, over ₹4,460.97 crore in the year-ago period. Expenses during the third quarter rose to ₹3,332.44 crore from ₹1,650.56 crore in the year-ago period, the filing said. The board approved "second interim dividend at the rate of ₹5.73 per equity share of face value of Re 1 each for the financial year 2021-22." The Hyderabad-headquartered firm under Ministry of Steel, is the country's largest iron ore mining company.

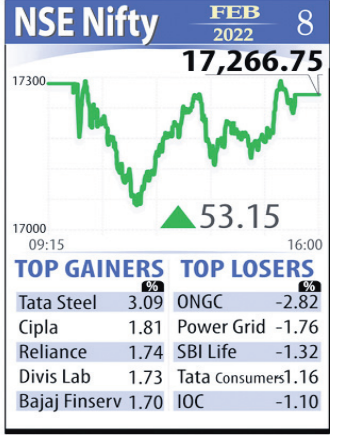
## Markets snap 3-day losing streak; RIL leads rebound

**Press Trust of India**

**Mumbai, Feb 8:** Snapping their three-day losing run, market benchmarks ticked higher after a seesaw session Tuesday on flag-end buying in energy, metal and finance counters amid a firm trend in global markets.

Covering-up of short positions by bears also supported the late recovery in stocks, traders said.

After swinging between gains and losses, the 30-share BSE Sensex finally closed 187.39 points or 0.33 per cent higher at 57,808.58. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 53.15 points or 0.31 per cent to 17,266.75.



Tata Steel topped the Sensex gainers' chart with a jump of 3.10 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries, Titan, Asian Paints and Axis Bank.

In contrast, PowerGrid, TCS, UltraTech Cement, Tech Mahindra, Kotak Bank, L&T and HDFC twins were among the losers, shedding as much as 1.66 per cent.

Of the Sensex constituents, 19 shares closed higher while 11 were in the red.

"Indian equities were highly volatile today, swaying between gains and losses while managing to close on a positive note.

Selling pressure from FIIs was countered by bargain hunting by domestic investors. European shares advanced over ECB President's comments stating that there are lower chances of a measurable tightening of monetary policy, which helped in comforting global investors," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

World stocks were largely positive amid strong corporate results despite concerns over policy tightening and inflationary pressures.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Tokyo, Shanghai and Seoul ended in the positive territory, while Hong

Kong was in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading with significant gains in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude slipped 0.81 per cent to USD 91.94 per barrel. The rupee declined 5 paise to close at 74.74 against the US dollar Tuesday, tracking the strength of the American currency in the overseas market and elevated crude oil prices.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital market, as they sold shares worth ₹1,157.23 crore on Monday, according to stock exchange data.

## BHARTI AIRTEL Q3 NET PROFIT DIPS 2.8 PC

**Press Trust of India**

**New Delhi, Feb 8:** Telecom operator Bharti Airtel Tuesday reported a 2.8 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to ₹830 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021.

The company had recorded a net profit of ₹854 crore in the same period a year ago.

Consolidated revenue increased by 12.6 per cent to ₹29,867 crore, from ₹26,518 crore in the December 2020 quarter.

"The recent tariff revision for mobile services has gone down well and we are exiting the quarter with an industry leading ARPU of ₹163. The full impact of the revised mobile tariffs, however, will be visible in the fourth quarter."

"Our Enterprise, Homes and Africa business continue to deliver strongly, with steady increase in contribution to the overall mix of the portfolio," Bharti Airtel MD and CEO for India and South Asia Gopal Vittal said.



## Relief & challenges for chipmakers as Nvidia-Arm deal collapses

**MANY ANALYSTS WARNED THE DEAL WAS 'DOOMED FROM THE START,' DUE TO ANTI-COMPETITIVE REGULATORY CONCERNS AND GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS**

**Reuters**

**Shanghai, Feb 8:** The chip industry is breathing a sigh of relief over the aborted purchase of ARM Ltd by US chipmaker Nvidia Corp but the firms and their shareholders are left with challenges the deal would have addressed.

Announced in 2020, Nvidia's plan to buy Britain's Arm from Japan's SoftBank was seen worth up to \$80 billion and sparked an immediate backlash.

There were concerns that the deal might violate Arm's status as a neutral player in the hyper-competitive chip sector.

Many analysts warned the deal was 'doomed from the start,' due to anti-competitive regulatory concerns and geopolitical tensions.

This prediction played out on Tuesday as SoftBank shelved the sale citing those very regulatory

hurdles, with the transaction drawing scrutiny in the United States, Britain and European Union.

"The whole point about Arm was always that it was the Switzerland of the semiconductor industry, dealing very even-handedly with all of its 500-plus licensees. That wasn't lost on the regulators in the UK, the US, EU and China," Hermann Hauser, a founder of Arm, told Reuters.

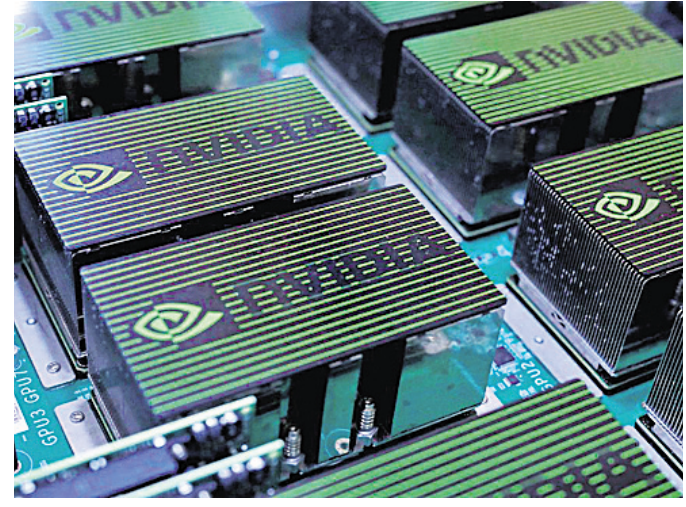
"There's a chip war going on around the world, so many weren't very welcoming of such a key architecture firm going to the US," said Greg Roh, head of research at Seoul-based Hyundai Motor Securities.

"Countries are competitively trying to build up their chip industries, and will try to defend against their chip technology moving to another country," he said.

Due to their low energy consumption, Arm-based chips were perfectly suited for mobile devices, and the company's technology underpinned the smartphone wave, licensing more and more powerful processor designs to Apple and its rivals.

The merger would have boosted both companies' ambitions to crack the booming data centre sector, which is currently dominated by Intel Corp and its x86 architecture.

In April, Nvidia announced plans to release a specialised central processing unit (CPU) chip for data



centres called "Grace," based on Arm's architecture. That was viewed at the time as a harbinger of the charge the firms would make together into the sector.

Arm makes instruction set architecture (ISA) which it licenses to a wide range of companies, which use it to make blueprints for chip designs.

Arm dominates the market for smartphone application processors, with customers including Apple and Qualcomm Inc.

Nvidia, meanwhile, makes graphics processing units (GPUs) used for high-performance computing applications and gaming.

Stacy Rasgon, who tracks the

chip sector Bernstein Research, says that Nvidia is not solely reliant on Arm to fulfil its data centre ambitions. But he said it would be harder for Nvidia to build out a software ecosystem around those chips on its own, "so buying ARM would be helpful for that."

**DOWNSIDES TO IPO**

With the sale collapsed, Arm said it now aims to go public in 2023 having gone private in 2016 when SoftBank purchased it.

In an interview with Reuters, newly appointed Arm CEO Rene Haas said he is "excited about the opportunity to be a publicly listed

**SoftBank's profit tumbled 98% in the quarter through December, as the value of its sprawling investments declined**

<p>Net profit for the fiscal third quarter totalled 29 billion yen (\$252 million), down from 1.17 trillion yen the previous year, the company said</p> <p>Arm, which SoftBank acquired in 2016, is a leader in artificial intelligence, IoT, cloud, metaverse and autonomous driving, with sales and profit growing in recent years. Its semiconductor design is widely licensed and used in virtually all smartphones, the majority of tablets and digital TVs</p>	<p>Besides Arm, SoftBank owns stakes in various technology companies including the SoftBank mobile carrier, Yahoo web services provider, Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba and vehicle-for-hire company Didi. SoftBank also takes part in funds that include other global investors called Vision Funds</p>
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As a result, its financial results tend to be complex and varied. SoftBank has bought and then sold stakes in office-sharing venture WeWork, robotics company Boston Dynamics, mobility service provider Uber and mobile carrier Sprint, all American businesses

company again."

But the company itself, together with Nvidia, had as recently as December tried to persuade British regulators that a deal with Nvidia was more favourable than an IPO.

They said going public would steer Arm to focus on short-term profits at the expense of its much needed foray into the server sector, especially as growth in the smartphone industry has slowed.

"While Arm's licensees such as Apple, Qualcomm, and Amazon have enjoyed skyrocketing revenue growth and profits, as well as soaring market valuations, Arm has lately endured comparably flat revenues, rising costs, and lower profits that would likely present challenges for a 30-year old public company," they said in a jointly-issued letter.

Still, there may be a silver lining, said Stewart Randall, who tracks the sector at Shanghai-based consultancy Intralink. He said that while a listed company is beholden to its shareholders, it potentially is also under greater pressure to be innovative and competitive.

"Revenues have grown pretty slowly under SoftBank. I hope this lights a fire under them," he said.

RAHUL'S BATTING POSITION IN FOCUS IN 2ND ODI AGAINST WINDIES

INDIA LOOK TO SEAL SERIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 8: Focus will be on vice-captain KL Rahul's batting position on his return from a short break as a buoyant India aim for another demolition act against the West Indies in the second ODI to seal the three-match series here Wednesday.

The India spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and Washington Sundar ran riot as they shot out West Indies for a meagre 176 and then skipper Rohit Sharma bossed the chase with a blistering 60, as the hosts recorded an easy six-wicket win in the lung-opener at the Motera.

Infused with new energy under Rohit, India looked a completely overhauled unit after being white-washed in South Africa and the team would certainly want to continue from where it left of Sunday night.

The biggest positive for India is that Rohit, who had missed the South Africa series due to a hamstring injury, was in brilliant form on comeback.

He would be raring to take the listless West Indies attack to cleaners once again. Ditto for Ishan Kishan, who opened with Rohit in the first ODI, and did a decent job with a 36-ball 28.

But with Rahul being available from this game onwards, it remains to be seen whether the wristy Karnataka batter opens along with the skipper or plays in the middle order on a relatively slow track. Rahul skipped the first ODI for a personal engagement.

If he opens the batting, then Jharkhand dasher Kishan will have to make way for the senior batter. If Rahul bats in the middle order then debutant Deepak Hooda, who played his part to perfection in the first game with an unbeaten 26 off 32 deliveries, might have to sit out as the team cannot afford to tinker with the rest of the middle-order comprising heavyweights Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and Suryakumar Yadav.

The game is also crucial for Kohli, who is enduring a lean patch and would like to get that 71st hundred that has been in waiting for over two years. The hosts, if they bat first, would certainly also like to set a target, as they build up for next year's World Cup.

On the bowling front, India



dished out a clinical show as the spin duo of Chahal and Washington ran through an unimpressive West Indies line-up.

The team management is unlikely to make any changes to the bowling attack. But it remains to be seen if one of the two tweekers is dropped and left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who is also waiting in the wings, makes his way into the playing XI.

The West Indies, on the other hand, will look to forget the hammering and eye improved show in an all the departments, especially

batting. Sunday was the 10th time in the last 16 games that West Indies failed to bat a full 50 overs. The Kieron Pollard-led side needs to get that aspect sorted and as pointed out by experienced all-rounder Jason Holder, the batters need to put a bigger prize on their wicket.

The team from the Caribbean also possesses hard-hitters including Nicolas Pooran and Pollard and can take any good attack to the cleaners. They would be hoping that Wednesday would be that day. Their bowlers, save Alzarri

Joseph, were taken to task by the Indian batters, especially Rohit, and they would like to come afresh and bowl in the right areas.

INDIA SQUAD

Rohit Sharma (C), KL Rahul (vc), Mayank Agarwal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shikhar Dhawan, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Ishan Kishan (wk), Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant (wk), Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan & Shahrukh Khan.

Siraj walks down memory lane

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: India pacer Mohammed Siraj says he was asked to "quit cricket and drive auto" with his father after a poor 2019 IPL season, making him think that his career in the league was over before MS Dhoni's counsel came to his rescue.

Siraj's seven wickets in nine matches with an economy rate of nearly 10 reflected his franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore's disastrous outing that season as they lost six straight games at the start and finished at the bottom.

His worst performance came against Kolkata Knight Riders when he was hit for five sixes and 36 runs in 2.2 overs, which included two beamers, forcing captain Virat Kohli to take him off bowling.

"When I bowled those two beamers against KKR, people said 'quit cricket and go back and drive autos with your father'," Siraj told The RCB Podcast.

"There were so many such comments. And people don't see the struggle behind all this. But I remember when I first got selected how Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) told me not to listen to everything the people have to say about me.

"You do well today and they'll praise you and when you don't the same people will abuse you. So don't ever take it seriously' And yes, the same people who trolled me incessantly back then say 'you're the best bowler bhai'. So, I know I

revealed. "When the IPL got over, nobody told me dad was so seriously ill. Whenever I called or asked, they'd say he's sleeping or he's resting, so I'd tell them okay don't disturb him. It was only when I reached Australia that I got to know that dad was in such a critical condition.

"I fought with my entire family... 'why didn't you tell me sooner'. They'd say we didn't want it to affect your career or your concentration and it made me angry. I told them if you would've told me earlier I would have at least met him before leaving for Australia.

"When he finally spoke to me, all he asked of me was to focus on playing for the country, fulfilling my dream and making the country proud. That's all I remembered and that's the only reason I stayed back... I thought of leaving the day he passed, but his words were the only thing that kept me back in Australia."

His father struggled a lot to ensure Siraj gets to play cricket and pursue his dream of playing for India. "My dad used to save the cut-outs from newspapers if my photo got published after a good performance and standing there (on Test debut) singing the national anthem I couldn't stop thinking how proud he would have been and how proud he would have been of me seeing him in India jersey, playing for the country. His words kept ringing in my ears even as I sang the national anthem."

don't want anybody's opinion. I'm the same Siraj I was back then."

The 27-year-old has since come a long way and is one of the three players retained by the franchise that is still eyeing its first ever title in the lucrative league.

Riding on his impressive showing in the 2020 IPL season, Siraj made his India debut during the team's tour of Australia, where he cemented his place with a magnificent five-wicket haul in the triumphant Gabba Test.

However, he had faced a personal tragedy during the same tour when Siraj lost his father. With travel restrictions in place owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, Siraj couldn't see his father before taking off for the tour of Down Under as he flew with the team directly to Australia after the conclusion of the IPL in the UAE.

"Dad wasn't keeping well in 2020. So whenever I used to speak to him, we were always crying on the call. So I didn't talk a lot with him because he'd keep crying and it made me feel very helpless," Siraj



BADMINTON ASIA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Indian teams clubbed with defending champs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: India have received decent draws at the Badminton Asia Team Championships with the men's and women's teams clubbed with defending champions Indonesia and Japan, respectively, at the continental event scheduled in Shah Alam, Malaysia from February 15 to 20.

The young Indian men's team, led by world championships silver medallist and India Open winner Lakshya Sen, will also have to compete with South Korea and Hong Kong in group A.

The women's team, comprising Syed Modi International finalist Malvika Bansod, Aakarshi Kashyap and Ashmita Chaliha, will face

Malaysia and Japan in group B during the continental event, which will also act as qualifiers for the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals.

The group A consists of Hong Kong, Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Korea. Teams finishing at the top two positions in each group of both the men's and women's events will make it to the last four and also qualify for the Thomas Cup finals in Bangkok May 17-22.

The championships lost some sheen with the withdrawal of Thailand, Chinese Taipei and China due to concerns over rising cases of COVID-19.

Three-time champions Indonesia will be looking to win a fourth men's title while reigning women's champions Japan will hope to retain the crown they won last time.

Bowlers' day out at Barabati

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 8: The opening day of the multi-day warm-up match between Odisha and Baroda witnessed a 16-wicket day Tuesday.

Odisha bundled out the visitors for 100 in 49 overs after being invited to bowl first. In response, the home team had their challenges too as they were struggling at 65/6 at stumps.

Young speedster Rajesh Mohanty was the pick of the Odisha bowlers as he finished with 4/33 in his 15 overs. And he was ably supported by the seasoned pacer Basant Mohanty who was magnificent in



RAJESH MOHANTY

his 17-over spell finishing with the figures of 3/17. Another pacer Debabrata Pradhan also bowled tight lines to bag a wicket conced-

ing only 12 runs in his seven overs.

Mitesh was the top scorer for Baroda with a 53-ball 26 runs. Like Mitesh, Parth Kohli (13) and Sashwat Rawat (13) also got some starts but couldn't capitalise.

In reply, Odisha batters too followed the footsteps of their opponents. Sandeep Patnaik (16) is the top scorer so far, with Anshuman Rath (11) being the second best. Odisha are still 35 runs behind the Baroda total having only four wickets in hand.

The way the pitch is behaving, the possibility is there that the result would be clear by the end of second day's play.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ranjita impresses

BHUBANESWAR: Ranjita Behera of Odisha had an impressive outing at the ongoing National Ski and Snowboard Championship at the Nanda Devi Ski Slope, Mountaineering and Ski Institute (M&SI) in ITBP Auli, Uttarakhand. Ranjita is participating in two categories - slalom and giant slalom - of Alpine Ski. Unfortunately, she couldn't secure a medal in the first race on the opening day of the meet, which started February 7 and will conclude February 9. Ranjita, known as the 'Snow Girl' in Odisha, is making her way into the winter sports despite coming from a place which doesn't witness snowfall barring Daringbadi in Koraput.



Five athletes vie for BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award

NEW DELHI: Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu and Tokyo silver winner weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu were among the five nominees for the BBC Indian Sportswoman (ISWOTY) of the Year award announced here Tuesday. Besides Sindhu and Mirabai, golfer Aditi Ashok, multiple medal winner at Tokyo Paralympics in shooting Avani Lekhara, Tokyo bronze winner boxer Lovlina Borgohain were the other three nominees, shortlisted by a distinguished jury of sports journalists, experts and sports writers. The awards ceremony will also honour a legendary sportswoman with the Lifetime Achievement award, and a young female player will be named as the BBC Emerging Player of the Year.

RANJI TROPHY GUIDELINES

Five-day quarantine, 30 members in squad



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 8: The opening round of Ranji Trophy matches will begin from February 17 following a five-day quarantine and the squad size, including support staff, has been capped at 30 as the BCCI aims to stage the 38-team event across nine different bio-bubbles amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BCCI had earlier announced that the Ranji Trophy, to be held after two years due to the pandemic, will take place in two phases, before and after the IPL.

Tuesday, the board issued "staging guidelines" to the nine host associations. The five-page document, which is in PTI's possession, states that each squad can have a maximum of 30 members, including a minimum of 20 players, with the number of support staff capped at 10.

"20 players will be eligible for match fees (Playing XI will be eligible for 100 per cent while the remaining 9 will be entitled for 50 per cent)," the guidelines state, adding that two COVID reserves will be allowed per team.

The opening round clash between defending champions Saurashtra and Mumbai in Ahmedabad will be a much anticipated one with Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane having been named in their respective teams.

Pujara Tuesday made the Saurashtra squad while Rahane was named in the Mumbai team. Both the seasoned batters are in dire

need of big runs and a Ranji Trophy hundred could well help them get their Test careers back on track.

All the teams will assemble in their respective venues on February 10, following which the players will go into a mandatory five-day quarantine. RT-PCR tests will be conducted on day two and day five, leaving teams two days for practice February 15 and 16.

The pre-quarterfinal, to be played in the first phase, will be a five-day affair from March 11. The teams who will take part in the sole round-of-16 clash will have to undergo a four-day quarantine.

The second phase of Ranji Trophy, comprising quarterfinals, semifinals and final, will be held from May 30 as announced earlier. According to the guidelines, each team "is encouraged to have a physician to deal with COVID-19 related issues".

The BCCI has increased the hosting fees to Rs 1.25 lakh per match day. Earlier, it used to be Rs five lakh for the entire game. Thirty-two teams have been divided into eight elite groups of four, while six teams form the plate division.

The pre-quarterfinal will take place between the lowest ranked qualified team from eight Elite Groups and plate group topper. Fifty-seven games will be played in the first phase and seven in second.

The venues are Rajkot, Cuttack, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Delhi, Haryana, Guwahati and Kolkata.

AFI condoles Asiad medallist Praveen Sobti's death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

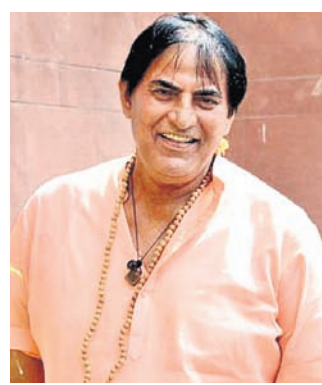
New Delhi, Feb 8: The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) Tuesday expressed deep shock at the demise of former double Asian Games gold medallist Praveen Kumar Sobti and said he will remain an inspiration for the future generations for his 11 years of international success.

Sobti, who became a household name after playing the role of Bheem in the TV series 'Mahabharat', died after suffering a cardiac arrest at his residence here

on Monday evening. He was 74 and is survived by wife, daughter, two younger brothers and a sister.

AFI President Adille Sumariwalla said with the demise of Sobti, Indian athletics has lost a wonderful ambassador and "gentle giant". "He will remain an inspiration for years to come as he is a great example of an athlete who gave his best on the international platform in the 11 years that he competed at the highest level," Sumariwalla said in his condolence message.

Hailing from a humble family in



Sarhali Kalan village near Amritsar, Sobti dominated the discus and hammer throw events for many years during the 1960s and 70s, winning medals in three Asian Games, one Commonwealth Games and taking part in two Olympics - the 1968 Mexico editions and the ill-fated 1972 Games in Munich - where Israeli athletes were massacred by a Palestinian terrorist group.

He came up with his career-best efforts in the two Olympics - 60.84m in hammer throw (1968) and 53.12m in discus throw (1972).

Sobti's discus throw gold medals in the Asiad came in the 1966 and 1970 editions. He won a hammer throw bronze in the 1966 Asian Games and a silver in the same discipline in the Commonwealth Games that year. He also won a discus throw silver in the 1974 Asian Games.

His hammer throw silver (in 1966) remains the only one that an Indian has won at the CWG. It was India's maiden medal in a field event in the CWG and only the second in athletics after Milkha Singh's 440 yard gold in the 1958 edition.