



**KANGANA'S OUTBURST**  
Kangana calls filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt as 'Bollywood mafia daddy' who has ruined the work culture in Hindi cinema  
**LEISURE P2**



**INDIA-CHINA DISPUTE**  
India's relationship with China is going through a very difficult phase, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said  
**INTERNATIONAL P10**



**SAHA COMES CLEAN**  
Wicket-keeper Wriddhiman Saha says the decision to drop him from the Indian team was taken in South Africa  
**SPORTS P12**

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**US mulls second Covid booster shot**  
Washington: The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is considering approving a fourth dose of a Covid-19 vaccine later in the year, the Wall Street Journal reported. Citing people familiar with the matter, the report claimed that the health regulatory body has begun reviewing data that could lead to clearing a second booster dose of the Pfizer, Moderna vaccines by September. However, the planning is still in early stages. The authorisation will also depend on ongoing studies establishing that a fourth dose would increase people's molecular defenses that waned after their first booster and reduce their risk of symptomatic and severe disease, the report said.



**Queen Elizabeth II Covid positive**  
London: Queen Elizabeth II has tested positive for Covid-19 and is experiencing "mild cold-like symptoms", Buckingham Palace said Sunday. The 95-year-old monarch remains at her Windsor Castle and is expected to carry out light duties over next few days. "She will continue to receive medical attention and will follow all the appropriate guidelines," a Buckingham Palace statement said. The current guidelines for anyone testing positive for coronavirus in England are for them to self-isolate for 10 days, with the option to end quarantine with two consecutive negative lateral flow tests on days six and seven.

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**EPFO mulling pension scheme for workers in ₹15K plus pay packet**

AGENCIES  
New Delhi, Feb 20: Retirement fund body EPFO is mulling a new pension product for organised sector workers who are getting basic wages of more than ₹15,000 per month and are not mandatorily covered under its Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 (EPS-95).  
At present, all those employees in the organised sector whose basic wage (basic pay plus dearness allowance) is up to ₹15,000 per month at the time of joining service are mandatorily covered under EPS-95.  
"There has been a demand for higher pension on higher contributions among the members of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). Thus, it is under active consideration to bring out a new pension product or scheme for those whose monthly basic wages are more than ₹15,000," a source privy to the development said.  
As per the source, the proposal on this new pension product could come up for discussion in the meeting of EPFO's apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees (CBT) March 11 and 12 at Guwahati. During the meet, a sub-committee constituted by the CBT on pension related issues in November 2021 would also submit its report. The source explained that there are EPFO subscribers who are getting more than ₹15,000 monthly basic wages who are forced to contribute lower (at the rate of 8.33 per cent of ₹15,000 per month into EPS-95) and thus they get lower pension.  
The EPFO had amended the scheme in 2014 to cap monthly pensionable basic wages to ₹15,000. The threshold of ₹15,000 applies only at the time of joining service. It was revised upward from ₹6,500 from September 1, 2014 in view of price rise and pay revisions in the formal sector. Later, there were demands and deliberations to raise the threshold monthly basic wage to ₹25,000, but the proposal was not approved. As per industry estimates, raising pensionable pay could have brought 50 lakh more formal sector workers under the ambit of EPS-95.  
There is a need for a new pension product for those who are either forced to contribute lower or who could not subscribe to the scheme as their monthly basic wages were higher than ₹15,000 at the time of joining service.

**AS WINTER WITHDRAWS**



Tourists ski down a slope, in the snow, during winter season at Kufri, in Shimla, Sunday  
PTI PHOTO

**Indians told again to leave as Ukraine slips**

Ukraine has a small but vibrant Indian community. There are about 20K Indian students studying there  
AGENCIES  
New Delhi, Feb 20: In a fresh advisory, the Indian embassy in Ukraine Sunday asked Indian nationals to leave the eastern European nation temporarily if their stay is not essential. The advisory came following rising tensions between the NATO countries and Russia over the Ukraine crisis.  
"In view of the continued high levels of tensions and uncertainties with respect to the situation in Ukraine, all Indian nationals whose stay is not deemed essential and all Indian students, are advised to leave Ukraine temporarily," the embassy said.  
It said available commercial flights, and charter flights may be available for travel, for an "orderly and timely departure" from Ukraine. "Indian students are advised to also get in touch with respective student contractors for updates on charter flights, and also continue to follow Embassy Facebook, website and Twitter for any update," the embassy said. According to an official document in 2020, Ukraine had a small but vibrant Indian community and there were about 18,000 Indian students studying in that country. The US and its Western allies have been severely critical of Russia over its build-up of forces near the Ukraine border.  
The US has already sent extra troops to Europe to support its allies in the backdrop of fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russia has positioned around 100,000 troops near its border with Ukraine besides sending warships into the Black Sea for naval exercises, triggering concerns among the NATO countries about a potential Russian invasion of Ukraine.  
Meanwhile, Russia extended military drills near Ukraine's northern borders Sunday amid increased fears that two days of sustained shelling along the contact line between soldiers and Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine could spark an invasion.  
The exercises, originally set to end Sunday, brought a sizable contingent of Russian forces to Belarus, which borders Ukraine. The presence of the Russian troops raised concern that they could be used to swoop down on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. The announcement came from the defense minister of Belarus.

**Sporadic violence marks 3rd phase**

In Kendrapara, a cop was attacked with a PVC pipe when police were trying to restore normalcy at a booth



Jajpur/Kendrapara, Feb 20: Sporadic incidents of violence were reported during the third phase of polling for the panchayat polls in Jajpur and Kendrapara districts where on-duty police personnel were attacked.  
Reports said two policemen sustained injuries after supporters of two rival political groups pelted stones at each other at booth number 14 at Jari panchayat under Binjharpur block in Jajpur district.  
The incident occurred following allegations of booth rigging. The two police personnel on duty at the booth sustained injuries after the miscreants pelted stones.  
Reports from Kendrapara said a police official was attacked with a PVC pipe when the police were trying to restore normalcy at booth no-3 at Gokhani Primary School under Dera panchayat under Rajnagar block in Kendrapara district. Tension occurred over missing of a polling agent's name in the voters' list.  
On receiving information, police personnel present at the booth

**POLLING 71 PER CENT**

BHUBANESWAR: Approximately 71% voter turnout was recorded in the third phase of Panchayat elections in 171 Zilla Parishad zones of Odisha, an official said here Sunday. The polling that began at 7 am ended at 1 pm. As per preliminary reports, barring a few booths of Jajpur and Kendrapara districts, polling was smooth in the state, Secretary to State Election Commission (SEC), RN Sahu said. As per reports, three media persons were allegedly assaulted in Jajpur district. The journalists from an electronic media house were attacked by miscreants while they were going to cover the alleged loot of ballot boxes from two booths at Bachala panchayat under Binjharpur block in the district, sources said. Sahu said the commission was yet to receive any report about the incident. The District Collector will be asked to submit a detailed report on this after completion of the voting, he said. The third phase voting was underway at 18,495 booths in 1,382 Gram Panchayats under 63 blocks of 29 districts. As many as 679 candidates were in fray for the 171 Zilla Parishad seats. The SEC has already decided to conduct re-polling at 45 booths, where election was disturbed during the first two phases of polling. The re-polling will be held from 9 am to 3 pm February 23 under tight security arrangements at the booths.

**RURAL POLLS**

Palpable tension prevailed in the area. Hundreds of villagers demanded arrest of the wrongdoers.  
In the second incident Sunday morning, voting was disrupted at booth nos-8, 9, 10 and 11 in Soti village of Jajpur after many voters made allegations of booth rigging.  
Korei BDO rushed to the spot. However, he was allegedly assaulted by irate locals in front of a polling booth at Soti village.  
Besides, three scribes of an electronic media, who had gone to cover the incident were severely assaulted by miscreants. Irate locals intercepted the journalists identified as Debashis Sahu, Gulshan Ali Nawaz and Bijay Sahoo and thrashed them. Their vehicles were also ransacked. On February 16, four journalists had been assaulted by miscreants when they were capturing a booth at Badal GP under Kanas.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**



People have answered your call to rise above caste and religion. They are voting for your rivals

**Assembly poll results to impact Prez elections in July**

As far as the value of votes is concerned, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of votes, approximately 83,824 followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal

likely to be conducted in June-July 2022, as the President is indirectly elected by an electoral college consisting of the elected members of both the Houses of Parliament and the Assemblies.  
The electoral college comprises 776 MPs of both the Houses and 4,120 MLAs of all the states and Union Territories. The electoral college has 1,098,903 votes, and a majority is 549,452 votes. As far as the value of votes is concerned, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of votes, approximately 83,824 followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal.  
The BJP has a brute majority in the Assemblies of UP and Uttarakhand and any reduction of seats will put the game in the opposition camp as the Chief

Ministers of different regional parties are trying to join hands.  
If they join hands and put up a joint candidate, the BJP will find it difficult to get its nominee elected. The only way would be a division in the opposition camp which may be a difficult task. After West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who is trying to expand her party, Trinamool Congress' footprints at the national level, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) had a meeting with Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.  
Not only is the Mumbai meeting important but KCR is also meeting Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Even Mamata Banerjee is likely to travel to



Hyderabad to meet KCR. He has the support of former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda who could be another possible candidate for President.  
However the Chief Ministers trying to unite en bloc is not a good sign for the Congress which may get isolated in the opposition while

out the BJP on key legislations in the Upper House since 2014.  
The southern states and Maharashtra account for more than 200 Lok Sabha seats and almost half of the electoral college which could be crucial in the next Presidential poll. If the regional parties team up, it will be unlikely that the BJP will have its way in the choice of President. Thus the electoral outcome in the five states will impact the presidential election.  
If the opposition puts up a candidate like NCP supremo Sharad Pawar who is capable of mustering support from others like Trinamool Congress, BJD, TRS, YSRCP, CPI-M, CPI and the other parties, then the BJP will have a tough task ahead of it.

**WEATHER**  
Bhub Ctk  
TEMP MAX 31.6°C 30.0°C  
MIN 21.4°C 21.0°C  
Humidity 87% 87% Forecast  
Rainfall 10mm 9.0mm mainly

# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
A romantic link is about to be presented to you as a surprise, shining and smiling. Ganesh advises you to be prepared in your best dress and to practice some romantic talking. You never know what the evening has in store for you. Only Ganesh does, and he is sporting a knowing smile.

**TAURUS**  
Spontaneity yet sincerity will be the ruling emotions of the day. Keep your eyes and ears open, advises Ganesh. As trouble might be headed your way. Make it a point to read the print well before you sign any legal contract today. Prevention is better than cure, reminds Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today is an important day to completely immerse yourself in your favourite activities, says Ganesh. But don't forget that loved ones come first as lack of warmth may affect family life. Show your family members that you care.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will need to rise above your emotional leanings and will have to choose between doing the right thing and keeping your loved ones happy. So far, you have managed to strike a balance. It is about time that you learn to deal with your fears, suggests Ganesh.

**LEO**  
Reinvention and rejuvenation – these are the two words that shall dictate your philosophy for the day. Refurbishing oneself does not always have to be in accordance with something new; taking a look back can be equally enlightening. In any case, it's a small world, and, hence, chances are that you shall revive most of your old contacts either in a social occasion or an official meeting.

**VIRGO**  
Achievement and accomplishment will be the highlights of the day, notes Ganesh. You will be recognised for your devotion to work and determination to succeed at your workplace. Much awaited promotions may come and financial arrears may also reach your hands.

**LIBRA**  
Call it two sides of the same coin, but today, you shall have the uncanny desire to be your own master and servant. But this day is all set to be animated and eventful and full of life. Expect a few run-ins with the opposite sex, as you are bound to attract quite a few of them, mainly because of your killer good looks.

**SCORPIO**  
You may find yourself sulking in your shell today, feels Ganesh. One event or another may lead you to shut out work. Hindsight and bitterness will not lead you anywhere, so Ganesh advises that you must steer clear of negativity. Soul searching and inner cleansing may best be complimented with meditation and yoga.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Pack your bags today for a long business trip, which will bear rich fruits. Be ready to pick up important business pointers and learn your way into your trade. Ganesh predicts pleasant surprises in store later in the day.

**CAPRICORN**  
It's time to party, whether or not you have no reason for it. Friends and even acquaintances will be invited to take part in the celebrations; you will be all charged up to have a blast of a day, says Ganesh. For those engaged in business, profits may come but it won't be the result of the efforts you put in.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today, your social butterflies will set hearts fluttering! Also, whatever you have been working on will reach completion now. You do have a great vision, but you're lost when it comes to executing your plans. Ganesh assures success if only you are a little more practical!

**PISCES**  
Being a friend in need is what today will be about, says Ganesh. Making new acquaintances and associations is also on the cards. Try not to let jealousy mar your better judgement while you are at it.



## WHEN MIRREN FELT LIKE A DEER IN THE HEADLIGHTS

Veteran Hollywood star Helen Mirren says she felt like a deer in the headlights in her early career because she had no idea how to behave in front of the camera and hadn't grasped the fundamentals of filmmaking.

## PARIS JACKSON DOESN'T WRITE HAPPY SONGS

Singer Paris Jackson, the only daughter of late superstar Michael Jackson and Debbie Rowe, and sister to Prince, 25 and Bigi, 19, said that she stays away from writing happy songs and most songs end up being about her death.



## Huma seeks roles that challenge her

**Hyderabad:** Actor Huma Qureshi says she decided to do *Double XL*, a film about body shaming, as she believes it can play an important role in bringing about a change in society.

But not every social responsibility should fall on filmmakers, she pointed out. "We have to be responsible when we are making the film. It is a situation where you have to monitor your own choices and why you are doing it," the 35-year-old actor added. Huma says she has a strategy of not repeating herself or playing the same kind of character in the projects she signs.

"I do not want to repeat myself as an actor. When I interact with the media or my fans, they get to see how I am in real life. When they see me on-screen, every time I want them to say, 'Hey but this is not Huma!' Because I want to put myself out of my comfort zone and find challenge in every character I play," said the actress.

*Double XL* is scheduled to be released in 2022.



## Kangana predicts future for showbiz

**Mumbai:** Kangana Ranaut has not only taken a dig at actress Alia Bhatt by calling her a 'bimbo' and filmmaker Karan Johar's 'papa ki pari', but also predicted the future of the film industry.

The Manikarnika actress also said that Sanjay Leela Bhansali's forthcoming directorial *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, which is slated to hit the screens Friday has wrong casting.

Kangana Sunday took to her Instagram story, where she in a cryptic post wrote: "This Friday, 200 cr will be burnt to ashes at the box office... For a papa (movie mafia daddy) ki pari (who likes to keep a British passport) because papa wants to prove that romcom bimbo can act..."

"Biggest drawback of the film is wrong casting... Yeh nahi sudhrene no wonder screens are going to South and Hollywood films... Bollywood is destined to doom jab tak movie mafia has power."

She added in another post that that the 'Bollywood mafia daddy' ruined the work culture in Hindi cinema.

"Bollywood mafia daddy, who has single handedly ruined the work culture in the film industry, has emotionally manipulated many big directors and forced his products of mediocrity on their cinematic brilliance," the actress further said.



## Abhishek-KRK exchanges leave netizens in splits

**Mumbai:** Netizens are all praises for actor Abhishek Bachchan over his witty responses to Kamaal R Khan (KRK) on Twitter.

Saturday, Abhishek shared one of the posters of the film *Vaashi*, starring Tovino Thomas and Keerthy Suresh.

"Another incredible movie coming from Malayalam film industry," he captioned the post.

However, his tweet did not go down well with KRK, who often posts demeaning remarks against

The war of words between KRK and Abhishek did not end here.

Responding to Abhishek, KRK wrote, "My film's budget is less than the budget of your make-up man. I wanted to make second film but Bollywood didn't let me. Otherwise, it would have been another blockbuster."

After seeing the particular tweet, Abhishek once again hit back at KRK.

"You keep trying. I hope you succeed someday," Abhishek tweeted.

"Abhishek -- you have the best sense of humour," a fan commented. "Ise kehte hai

krna style se. Savage, Bachchan," another fan wrote.

On the work front, Abhishek will be seen in *Dasvi*, which also features Yami Gautam. AGENCIES



Hindi film actors.

"Brother, someday you Bollywood people should also make an incredible film," KRK wrote.

Abhishek was quick to give a befitting reply to him. "Taking a sly dig at KRK's film *Deshdrohi*, he tweeted "Prayaas karenge. Apne banai thi na.... *deshdrohi*."



## TOM HOLLAND AT IT AGAIN Uncharted tops box-office in 1st weekend

**THE MOVIE MARKS THE BOX-OFFICE'S BIGGEST OPENING SINCE THE STAR'S LAST FILM, SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME**

**Los Angeles:** Hollywood star Tom Holland has taken his game a notch higher this time with his latest release *Uncharted*, which has earned \$45 million over the four-day Presidents' Day weekend -- a tally that would notch it as the biggest theatrical opening of 2022 so far. The Tom Holland vehicle marks the box-office's biggest opening since the star's last film, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, which domi-



nated the holiday season to become the third highest-grossing domestic film release in history, reports variety.com.

After anchoring a Marvel trilogy, *Uncharted* is seen as a test of Holland's box office appeal outside of spandex. The film marks his first starring role in a non-Marvel theatrical blockbuster, apart from last spring's *Chaos Walking*, which sat on Lionsgate's shelf for years and hardly made any noise in the

middle of a pandemic. Directed by *Zombieland* duology helmer Ruben Fleischer, *Uncharted* stars Holland as treasure hunter Nathan Drake.

The rest of the cast includes Mark Wahlberg, Sophia Ali and Antonio Banderas. They get up to some antics on their adventure. The film has been met with largely negative reviews from critics, turning in a 39 per cent score on the critical aggregate website Rotten Tomatoes. Audiences have been more receptive; the film scored a B+ CinemaScore rating, indicating general approval from ticket buyers.

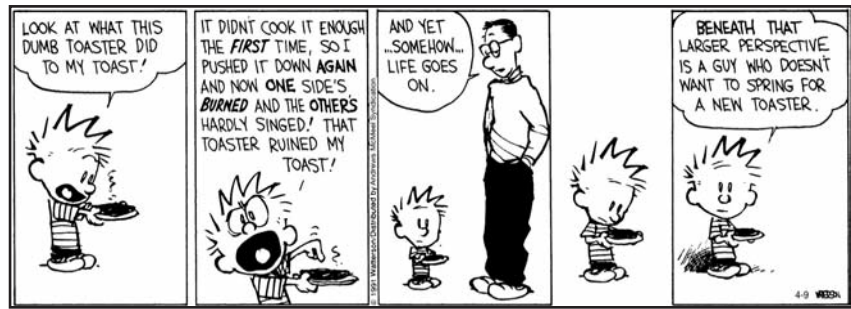
Channing Tatum's *Dog* took in \$5.044 million Friday from 3,677 locations, putting it on the path to a second place opening at the box office. With a production budget of \$15 million, that's a very solid start for the buddy comedy.

Sony's *Spider-Man: No Way Home* should secured third in its umpteenth weekend, with Sony projecting a \$9.1 million gross over the holiday weekend.

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

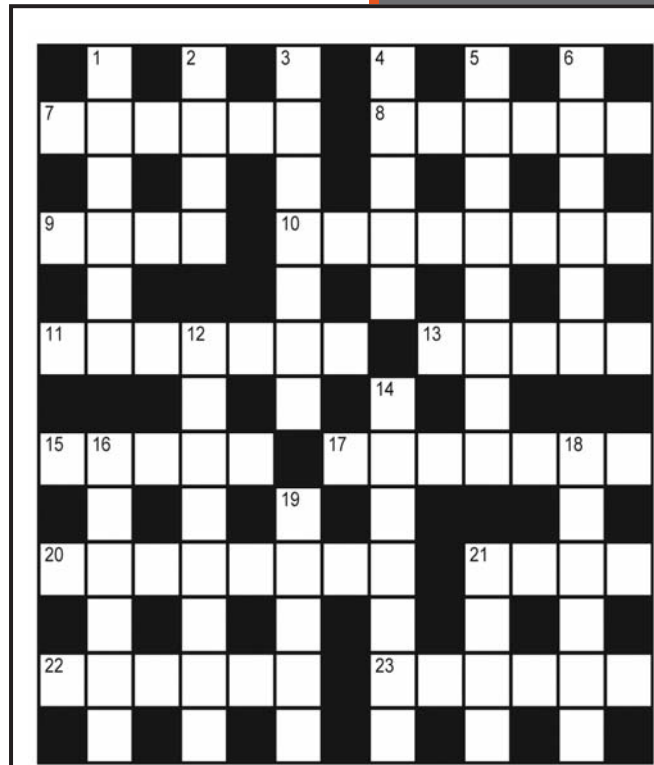


## BREVITY



## FUN post

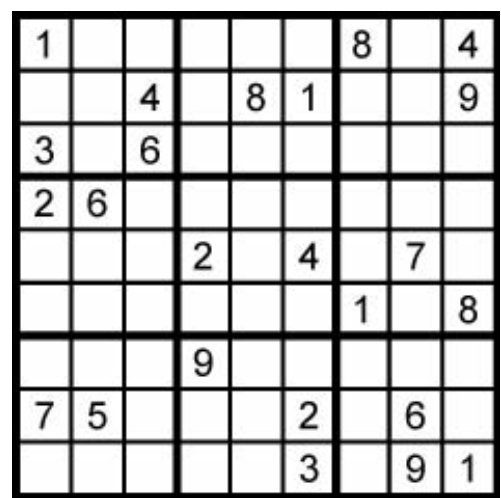
## CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Urban problem
  - 8 Secure
  - 9 Backgammon equipment
  - 10 Downpours
  - 11 Fishermen
  - 13 Cherish
  - 15 Hosiery shade
  - 17 Deodorant type
  - 20 Intensity
  - 21 Clink
  - 22 Theatre
  - 23 Buckle under (4,2)
  - 4 Fret
  - 5 Be the valet (6,2)
  - 6 Winner
  - 12 Like some rabbits (3-5)
  - 14 Plead
  - 16 Tear into
  - 18 Beginning
  - 19 Big bashes
  - 21 Coffee, to some
- Down**
- 1 Choice
  - 2 Green gem
  - 3 Greatcoats

## SUDOKU

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



## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



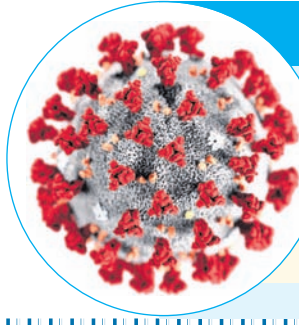
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## SAFETY FIRST

Staffers of a private hospital in CDA Sector-8 area of Cuttack being trained on fire safety, Sunday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	42,42,55,015	34,94,60,758	59,03,219
India	4,28,22,473	4,20,86,383	5,11,903
Odisha	12,82,481	12,68,158	9,011

# Rain lashes twin cities

IMD predicts light to moderate rain or thundershower at one or two places over Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj February 24 and 25



Commuters wade through knee-deep water near Sishu Bhawan Square in City

**AS RAIN LASHED THE CITY, SEVERAL LOW-LYING AREAS IN RASULGARH, PALASUNI, BOMIKHAL, NAYAPALLI, GGP COLONY AND FOREST PARK WERE WATERLOGGED**

**TRAFFIC AT SEVERAL AREAS WAS ALSO AFFECTED AS POOR VISIBILITY AND CLOGGED ROADS MADE SMOOTH MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES DIFFICULT**

Maharashtra and neighbourhood has become less marked," the IMD said.

The weatherman also stated that light to moderate rainfall and thundershower over northern and southern coastal districts of Odisha will continue for next 24 hours. Meanwhile, dry weather will pre-

vail over the rest of the districts. "No large change is expected in the minimum temperature (night temperature) during next four to five days over the districts of south Odisha and north coastal Odisha. Minimum temperature (night temperature) is likely to fall by three to four degrees over the districts of north interior Odisha during next two days and again it will gradually rise by three to four degrees in subsequent two to three days over the districts of north interior Odisha," the IMD bulletin read.

The weatherman also predicted that light to moderate rain or thundershower at one or two places over the districts of Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts February 24 and 25.

# Rural polls: 3.8L litre liquor seized

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 20:** The state Police has seized over 3.8 lakh litre of liquor from across the state during the special drive against trade of alcohol over the period of last one month till the second phase of the Panchayat elections, it was learnt.

According to the Odisha Police, during the strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, a total of 3,88,380.634 litre of liquor have been seized from several districts between January 19 and February 18, 2022.

The purpose of the crackdown is to make the three-tier elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions free from any untoward incidents caused by anti-social elements.

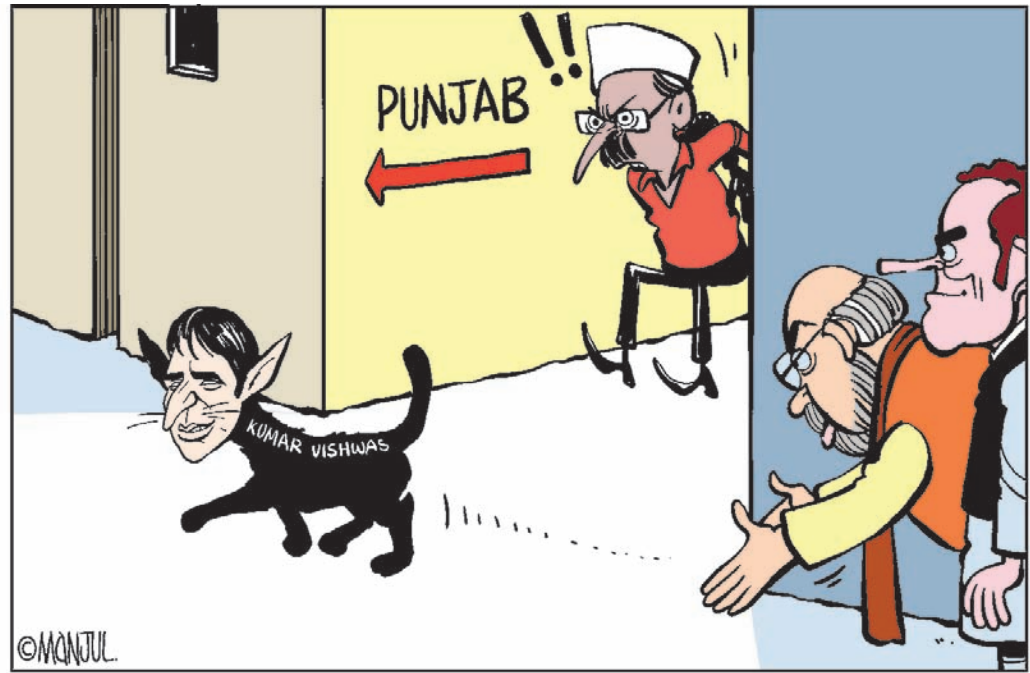
Similarly, 2310.96 grams of narcotics drugs were seized by the inspection teams during the drive.

As per police sources, more than 2.14 lakh litres of liquor have been seized from Balasore making it the highest among all police districts. Similarly, out of the total 38, a maximum of 11 arms were seized from Ganjam Police district limits followed by Rourkela (9).

A total of 1906 warrants have been executed with Ganjam district recording the highest of 239 followed by Balasore (234).

The Odisha government has already imposed a ban on sale and distribution of liquor 48 hours before the commencement of voting in all the five phases of the ongoing Panchayat elections in the state.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Humanity, truth can't be divided on basis of gender or caste: Prez

PNN & AGENCIES

**Puri, Feb 20:** President Ram Nath Kovind Sunday asserted that humanity and truth are supreme and cannot be divided on the basis of caste, gender or religion, as serving the needy has always been accorded top priority in Indian culture.

Inaugurating the three-year-long celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, the founder of Gaudiya Math and Mission, in Puri, the President said, "Although various religious traditions and practises are prevalent in different parts of India, there is only one belief and that is to work for the welfare of all, considering the entire humanity as one family."

"Serving the needy has been given top priority in our culture. Humanity and truth are supreme, which cannot be divided. The ultimate goal is welfare of the society," he added.

Hailing doctors, nurses and health workers, Kovind said they displayed this spirit of service during the Covid-19 pandemic, despite many of them contracting the virus. "Many of our Covid warriors sacrificed their lives, but the dedication of their co-workers remained unwavering. The whole country would always be indebted to such warriors," the President said, praying for a world free of Covid-19. Invoking the 16th century Bhakti



President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates the three-year-long celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, the founder of Gaudiya Math and Mission, in Puri, Sunday. Dignitaries, including the first lady Savita Kovind and Governor Ganeshi Lal, are seen

saint Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Kovind said the tradition of worshipping the Almighty with 'Bhakti Bhav' (devotion) has been significant in India.

"The word 'Mahaprabhu' was added to Sri Chaitanya's name because of his great teaching to the society," the President said, adding that inspired by his extraordinary devotion, a large number of people chose the path of Bhakti. Quoting the revered saint, he said, "One must be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of any sense of ego and must give respect to others."

He said saints of the 'Bhakti Marg' were above the prevailing discrimination in that period based on

religion, caste, gender and rituals, and sought to strengthen the unity of India's cultural diversity.

"The saints of the Bhakti community did not contradict each other, but were often inspired by each other's writings," Kovind said.

Kovind also expressed confidence that the Gaudiya Mission would be successful in its resolve of spreading the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to the world, keeping its objective of human welfare as paramount.

The President was on a two-day visit to Odisha. On Saturday, he paid obeisance to Lord Jagannath at Srimandir. Following the event, the President left for Delhi.

# 'Attack on scribes questions state's law & order'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 20:** Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Sunday condemned the attack on three journalists during the third phase of the Panchayat elections at Binjharpur in Jajpur district.

He said, "I am deeply saddened by the inhumane attacks on journalists, especially in Binjharpur in Jajpur district. Media is the fourth pillar of democracy. Repeated attacks on media and media personnel are not good for our state, which is sad and regrettable. There is debate in politics but there is no place for violence."

"Frequent attacks on journalists

**THREE JOURNALISTS, WHO WERE REPORTING LIVE FROM THE BINJHARPUR BLOCK OF JAJPUR, WERE ALLEGEDLY ATTACKED BY A MOB INVOLVED IN BOOTH RIGGING**

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER ADITYA PRASAD PADHI CONDEMNED THE ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS AND SAID THAT AN ORDER HAS BEEN ISSUED TO THE DGP AND JAJPUR ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE STRINGENT ACTION AGAINST THE CULPRITS**

while covering the elections have raised questions about the conduct of elections, our democratic system and the law and order situation in the state," Pradhan added.

Meanwhile, several other political leaders from different parties also criticised the attack on journalists at various places in Odisha.

BJD leader and MP Subash Singh said BJP has been creating poll violence due to the fear of losing votes. He also said attacks on journalists are unacceptable and law will take action against those responsible.

Congress leader and spokesperson Nishikant Mishra also criticised the attacks on journalists

and demanded action against those accountable.

Sources said three journalists, who were reporting live from the Binjharpur block of Jajpur, were allegedly attacked by a mob involved in booth rigging.

State Election Commissioner Aditya Prasad Padhi condemned the attacks on journalists and said that an order has been issued to the DGP and Jajpur administration to take stringent action against the culprits.

State government's Media Advisor Manas Mangraj, too, condemned the attack and said strict action will be taken against the culprits.



## MAHA SHIVRATRI PREP

An artisan applies a fresh coat of paint on a figurine on the premises of Akhandalamani temple at Cantonment Road in Cuttack, Sunday, as the state gears up for Maha Shivratri

OPP PHOTO

# Sunabeda NAC asst engg held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Feb 20:** Vigilance sleuths Sunday arrested Sunabeda NAC assistant engineer Manoj Kumar Patra on charges of amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Acting on allegations against the accused officer, six teams of the anti-corruption wing led by five DSPs with support of eight inspectors and other staff carried out simultaneous raids at the properties of Patra in Khurda, Gajapati, Ganjam and Koraput districts February 18 and 19.

During the searches, the sleuths claimed to have unearthed disproportionate assets (DA) worth crores of rupees belonging to the officer.

"Patra couldn't account for his

possession of uneven property satisfactorily during the raids and was subsequently arrested," said a Vigilance official.

A case under Section 13(2), 13(1)(b)/12 Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 as amended by PC (Amendment) Act, 2018 has been registered against Patra and his wife. As per police sources, Patra has been forwarded to the court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Jeypore.

The Vigilance sleuths have so far come across cash of Rs 28.61 lakh, 369.10gm gold and 288.51gm silver jewellery worth Rs 11.44 lakh. A 3BHK flat at Pokhariput in Bhubaneswar worth about Rs 80 lakh, a double-storied building at Berhampur worth Rs 50.57 lakh and seven plots were also found in their possession.

# New NIT Rourkela dir takes charge

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** K Umameshwar Rao has assumed charge as the new director of National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela, from Simanchalo Panigrahi, who was appointed as the institute's interim director in October 2021.

Rao previously served as the director of the National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK), also known as NIT Surathkal. He also served as a faculty for nearly three decades at IIT Kharagpur.

Some of his important portfolios include Chairman (Estate), and the Vice Chairman of Joint Entrance Examination. He was also the Head of the Mining Engineering department from 2006-08 and 2010-14.

Rao said he aims to improve research and innovation infrastructure with the help of faculty and students to make NIT Rourkela a world-class campus.

He would work towards increasing multidisciplinary quotient in curriculum with special emphasis given to environmental and value-based education.

Highlighting his priorities for the institute, the newly-appointed Director said, "NIT Rourkela is the pride of Orissa. The institute's rank in the NIRF Ranking matters today. Time has come to redefine our objectives and work towards them with determination, required skills, and strategies having foresight vision for the exponential growth of the institute. Our accomplishment towards the goal starts now."

# Reduction in air pollution can help improve kidney function: Study

Improving air quality may not only help your lungs but also your kidneys, suggests a study. Researchers from King's College London found that ambient fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentration reduction led to significant improvement in laboratory test results used to assess a patient's kidney function.

"Long-term exposure to PM2.5 has been associated with declined kidney function. However, whether the association is causal remains unknown," said Co-author Yiqun Han, Research Associate in School of Public

Health, Imperial College London. In the study, published in the journal Health Data Science, the team conducted a quasi-experimental difference-in-difference analysis. They identified a strong linkage between the reduced PM2.5 with improved kidney function, Han added.

The researchers analysed the demographic and laboratory records of 5,115 adults.

They investigated the change in kidney function parameters between 2011 and 2015 according to the population's long-term exposure to PM2.5 derived from an



**R**esearchers from King's College London found that ambient fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentration reduction led to significant improvement in laboratory test results used to assess a patient's kidney function

environmental database. The team found that a 10 Ig/m3

reduction in PM2.5 significantly improved multiple kidney func-

tion parameters. Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) increased by 0.42 mL/min/1.73m2, blood urea nitrogen (BUN) decreased by 0.38 mg/dL, and uric acid (UA) decreased by 0.06 mg/dL, respectively.

GFR is a test used to check how well the kidneys are working and further progression of chronic kidney disease.

Air pollution is known to affect kidney function. Several studies have shown that exposure to bad air is associated with an increased chronic kidney disease-related morbidity and mortality. Exposure

to PM2.5, even at relatively low concentrations, is a risk factor for a lower kidney function and a faster decline in kidney function.

Han suggested the need for rapid air quality improvement driven by the action.

Besides kidneys, reduction in air pollution may help improve population health, including cardiorespiratory diseases, metabolic diseases, mental and neurological disorders, and indicators for non-fatal risks (e.g., medical expenditure and disability), in addition to kidney diseases, he said. IANS

# State reports below 500 fresh Cov cases



**FRESH STATS**

THE DAILY POSITIVITY RATE WAS 0.82 PER CENT SUNDAY, AND 122 CHILDREN WERE AMONG THOSE NEWLY INFECTED

ODISHA TESTED A TOTAL OF 60,084 SAMPLES FOR COVID-19 IN THE LAST 24 HOURS

THE DEATH TOLL DUE TO CORONAVIRUS MOUNTED TO 9,011, WITH 17 MORE PATIENTS SUCCUMBING TO THE INFECTION

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 20:** Odisha's Covid-19 caseload rose to 12,42,481 Sunday as 492 more people, 42 less than the previous day's figure, tested positive for the virus, the Health department said in a bulletin.

The death toll due to coronavirus mounted to 9,011, with 17

more patients succumbing to the infection, it said. The state had logged 534 new Covid-19 cases and 18 fresh fatalities Saturday.

Odisha now has 6,308 active cases, while the 12,67,109 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 1,266 in the last 24 hours, a bulletin said. 53 more Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far.

Of the new deaths, seven were reported from Sundargarh district and six from Balasore.

The daily positivity rate was 0.82 per cent Sunday, and 122 children were among those newly infected, the bulletin said.

Odisha tested a total of 60,084 samples for Covid-19 in the last 24 hours, it stated.



Writer Bijayini Das being felicitated with Utkal Bharati Kuntala Kumari Saraswat Samman at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack, Sunday

## SAFEGUARDING COMMUNITY RIGHTS

# Legal Aid Clinic for transgenders inaugurated

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 20:** The Odisha State Legal Services Authority (OSLSA), in collaboration with Solidarity and Action Against The HIV Infection in India (SAATHII), launched a legal aid clinic for transgenders in Bhubaneswar Sunday. The clinic is said to be the first of its kind in state.

The legal aid clinic was inaugurated virtually by Justice Jaswant Singh, Judge at Orissa High Court and Executive Chairman of Odisha State Legal Services Authority.



Singh in his address said that right to legal services is universal and transcends diversity of race, caste, religion, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. It would necessarily include citizens of non-mainstream gender identities within its ambit.

Assistant Director of SAATHII Biswa Bhusan Pattanayak said that in the National Legal Services vs. Union of India and Ors judgment, delivered April 15, 2014, the Supreme Court of India recognised the gender identity of transgenders, and directed the Centre and states to ensure their inclusion in all walks of life, including in legal services.

"Further, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and Rules, 2020, have made provisions for safeguarding the rights of transgenders for leading dignified lives. In May 2017, the Government of Odisha



**Right to legal services is universal and transcends diversity of race, caste, religion, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. It would necessarily include citizens of non-mainstream gender identities within its ambit**

amended the Odisha State Legal Services Authority Rules, 1996 and included transgender persons as one of the beneficiaries to avail free legal aid," he said.

"However, despite an increasingly progressive socio-legal environment, transgender persons continue to face stigma, discrimination and violence in family, society, access of public services

and inheritance of property etc due to their gender identity. A recently completed intervention by SAATHII in 11 districts of Odisha, Manipur and Telangana served 3,679 gender and sexual minority individuals

The Legal Aid Clinic will be operational at SAATHII's Bhubaneswar office

It will extend support in legal literacy, issues in access to entitlements and services including transgender identity cards, and human rights violations faced by transgenders

The cases will be addressed by paralegal volunteers from the transgender community and empanelled lawyers associated with District Legal Services Authority, Khurda

(60 per cent of whom were transgender); addressed 542 crises involving violence, discrimination and exclusion; and helped redress 468 of these crises. A large proportion of violence and discrimination was perpetrated by the general public (37 per cent), followed by parents, siblings and other biological family members (17 per cent)," added Pattanayak.

The Legal Aid Clinic will be operational at SAATHII's Bhubaneswar office. It will extend support in legal literacy, issues in access to entitlements and services including transgender identity cards, and human rights violations faced by transgenders.

The cases will be addressed by paralegal volunteers (PLVs) from the transgender community and empanelled lawyers associated with District Legal Services Authority, Khurda.

# CUO pact to help uplift tribals



*It is the renewal of an MoU signed between Central University of Odisha, Koraput and Council of Analytical Tribal Studies, Koraput for 2017-2020*

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 20:** The Central University of Odisha (CUO) and the Council of Analytical Tribal Studies (COATS), Koraput, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Sunday for next three years to collaborate on research and development concerning tribals and tribal areas of Odisha, especially the underdeveloped district of Koraput.

CUO Registrar Asit Kumar Das and COATS Director PC Mohapatra signed and exchanged the MoU in the presence of CUO Vice-Chancellor In-Charge SK Palita, COATS Professor Jagabandhu Samal and officials and faculty members of both the institutions.

the era of climate change. Signing the MoU was the need of the hour in which both the institutions would support each other for the benefit of Koraput region, especially for tribals' life and livelihood," he added.

This is the renewal of the earlier MoU signed between the two premier institutions of academic excellence for the period 2017-2020 on the basis of which they cooperated in promoting mutual academic interest, providing expert support for tribal welfare and community development by undertaking collaborative research, exchanging academic information and resources, and using academia infrastructure and organising lectures, conferences and seminars.

Mohapatra hoped that the renewal of the MoU will help promote the language, literature, art, culture and livelihood of tribals.

Registrar Asit Kumar Das was highly optimistic of the MoU and promised that CUO will do its best to redefine academic areas, make inroads into new frontiers and earn a new name for the Koraput region.

**In the recent NITI Ayog survey, Koraput has been placed as the number one or most improved aspirational district of the country in the field of education. The culture and traditions of the tribals need to be maintained and their economic status needs to be improved. However, increasing deforestation and depletion of natural resources are cases of concern in the era of climate change. Signing the MoU was the need of the hour in which both the institutions would support each other for the benefit of Koraput region, especially for tribals' life and livelihood**

SK PALITA | VICE-CHANCELLOR IN-CHARGE, CUO, KORAPUT

## Centre's S&T fete tomorrow

**NEW DELHI:** India in the field of science and technology and participation in futuristic mega science projects will be the highlight of the week-long celebrations starting Tuesday. The programme will be held in Indian languages including Odia, Kashmiri, Dogri, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Assamese, Nepali and Maithili.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before notary public, Bhubaneswar I .Navarun Shyam, S/o .Nabendu Shyam, R/O Kalarahanga, BBSR-751024, do hereby state that my son's name has been changed from "Reyansh" as recorded in some documents to "Reyansh Shyam" for all purposes. I hereby declare that Reyansh and Reyansh Shyam is one and same person, and that his Father's name is Navarun Shyam and Mother's name is Moumita Shyam.

## GO, GOA, GOLD

# Researchers find traces of gold in iron ore deposits

In a discovery, which has the potential to make Goa's beleaguered mining industry stand up and take notice, a study conducted by Goa University has revealed traces of gold in the iron ore harvested and exported for decades from the mining pits in the coastal state.



BEFORE THE BAN HOWEVER, EXCAVATION AND EXPORT OF IRON ORE HAD SHOT UP FROM A MERE 4.36 TONS OF ORE IN 1951 TO NEARLY 50 MILLION TONS IN THE EARLY 2010S BEFORE THE APEX COURT ORDER PUT AN END TO INDISCRIMINATE EXPLORATION, WHICH ACCORDING TO THE STUDY, HAS RESULTED IN THE EXPORT OF AROUND 880 MILLION TONS OF IRON ORE FROM GOA TO MARKETS IN CHINA, JAPAN, TAIWAN, SOUTH KOREA, AMONG OTHERS

The study, conducted by researcher Sujata Dabolkar and faculty Nandakumar Kamat at the Botany department of the university, has revealed that gold concentration ranges from 7.71-13 ppm indicating the auriferous (containing gold) nature of Goa's iron ore.

A research paper published by the duo in the latest edition of the Journal of Geosciences Research, states that it is the first such research conducted in the state which analyses the presence of gold in ore extracted from Goa's iron ore mines, which have been shut down since 2018, following a Supreme Court order which pointed out irregularities in the mining lease renewal processes.

"Detection of gold in the samples has been reported. The gold concentration ranges from 7.71-13 ppm indicating auriferous nature of Goa's iron ore. There

needs to be further research on neglected auriferous iron ore of Goa," the research paper states, adding that it is the first such report on "the detection of gold

from the BHQ (banded hematite quartzite) and the BMQ (banded magnetite quartzite) of Goa".

Mining exploration for iron ore in Goa began in the Portuguese

era, when a cash-strapped Portuguese empire allocated mining leases to its colonial subjects in Goa for the purpose of exploration and export.

Several hundred mining leases were allotted to local residents out of which nearly 100 were in operation until 2012, when a Rs 35,000 crore mining scam led to the first Supreme Court ban on the industry. While the ban was lifted after two years, mining extraction was stopped once more in 2018, which led to the second ban on the industry.

Before the ban however, excavation and export of iron ore had shot up from a mere 4.36 tons of ore in 1951 to nearly 50 million tons in the early 2010s before the apex court order put an end to indiscriminate exploration, which according to the study, has resulted in the export of around 880 million tons of iron ore from Goa to markets in China, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, among others.

The scholars in their study however point out that both the

government sector as a regulator and private mining companies were "lacking in knowledge of systematic geochemical evaluation" of iron ore and were only oriented towards an excavation and export strategy, which "completely overlooked gold mineralisation".

"Despite (being) endowed with chemically the most diverse and creative Archean rocks in the WDC (Western Dharwar Craton), Goa still lacks an intensive knowledge based sustainable mining policy. There is further scope for confirmation of gold by Geological Survey of India, IITs and other research institutes of India," the study states.

"There is a lot of scope to carry out work on the metallogeny of gold. Biogeochemical cycling of gold can be studied including the investigations on occurrence of vermiform gold, phytoform gold, gold from the alluvial deposits, sediments and laterites," the study states.

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**

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

SHORT TAKES

Tiffin bomb planted by Reds neutralised

**Rayagada:** Personnel of district voluntary force recovered a tiffin bomb placed on roadside on the way to Parsali panchayat under Kalyansinghpur block of Rayagada district Sunday and thereby warded off a major mishap. It was suspected keeping in view the ongoing three tier-panchayat elections that the Maoists might have planted the explosive targeting security forces to disrupt the election process. A bomb squad reached the spot and defused it, said the Rayagada SP. The SP added that Maoists had planted the explosive in order to make their presence felt in Niyamgiri area. The entire area has been cordoned off and combing operation has been intensified by the security forces.

Berhampur ITI girls join German MNC

**Berhampur:** Two tribal girl students of Berhampur ITI here have received appointments in German multi-national company Fludenberg at Chennai. The successful students were identified as Nishamani Behera and Radhika Behera, both residents of Kalo village under R Udayagiri block in Gajapati district. The appointment of the two girls is a matter of pride for Berhampur ITI, Principal Rajat Kumar Panigrahi said.



Women wait for their turn in a long queue to cast their votes outside Kaliaguda booth under Mathili block in Malkangiri district, Sunday

OP PHOTO

DANCE OF DEMOCRACY

Man thrashes wife to death

**Sonepur:** In a bone-chilling incident, a man, in a fit of rage, thrashed his wife to death over a family feud Saturday night at Ainlachat village under Ulunda police limits of Subarnapur district. The accused has been identified as Shankar Dehury, husband of the deceased Mamata Dehury, a resident of Ainlachat village. An altercation erupted between Shankar and Mamata over an issue late Saturday night, the reason of which has not been known yet. Shankar got annoyed over the arguments and severely beat his wife, leaving her grievously injured. She was taken to a hospital where doctors declared her 'brought dead'. Mamata's family members have lodged an FIR with Ulunda police alleging murder by her husband.

Teacher arrested for carrying cash to influence voters

**Deogarh:** Police arrested and produced a school teacher in court following the seizure of ₹3 lakh from his possession while he was travelling in a car, Saturday evening. The accused was identified as Saubhagya Patra, a native of Bhukabeda village and teacher of Bhutel UP School under Tielibani block. He was accused of carrying huge amount of cash in a car to distribute among the voters ahead of the election. Acting on a tip-off and directed by Deogarh SP Raj Kishore Paikray, a special squad of Deogarh police conducted a raid and intercepted the car on National Highway-49 near Bhukabeda village, Friday evening.

Basudevpur: 78 booths sensitive

**Basudevpur:** The administration has identified 78 booths as sensitive and 23 as hyper-sensitive in Basudevpur block of Bhadrak district. Elections will be held at 485 booths in the block Tuesday. 1,88,413 voters will exercise their franchise to decide the fate of 132 sarpanch, 120 samiti member and 1,106 ward member candidates in 36 panchayats.

Locals beat up sarpanch aspirant for giving cash

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Feb 20:** Residents beat up a sarpanch candidate and tied him with ropes and detained him after they allegedly spotted him distributing cash at Banakati village under Tangasola panchayat of Badasahi block in Mayurbhanj district, late Saturday night.

**Informed, supporters of the accused candidate detained the supporters of the opposite party candidate. The twin incidents have sparked tension in the area**

The detained sarpanch candidate was identified as Dasarathi Murmu. After reports surfaced, supporters of Murmu detained the supporters of the opposite party candidate, it was learnt.

The twin incidents have sparked tension in the area. On being informed, police rushed to the spot Sunday morning and successfully placated the villagers and freed Murmu from detention. Locals alleged that Murmu was moving from house to house and distributing cash to influence the voters in violation of model code of conduct. Later normalcy was restored in the village. However, no complaint had been filed in the police station when the reports came.

The incident occurred when Murmu visited Banakati village late Saturday night. Some youths

spotted him distributing cash and detained him. They later thrashed him for the act and tied him with ropes and detained him for the whole night. The video of the incident has gone viral on social media. On being informed, Murmu's supporters also detained the supporters of the opposite candidate the whole night.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

e-Tender Notice No. ETCPMIIBBS20220, Dated: 10.02.2022  
**NAME OF WORK:** BHADRAK - NERGUNDI 3RD LINE PROJECT : EXECUTION OF BALANCE EARTHWORK AND MINOR BRIDGES IN FLYOVER PORTION BETWEEN BYREE - KAPILAS ROAD (CH-1500 TO CH-6200 FROM CSB OF BYREE) OF BHADRAK - NERGUNDI 3RD LINE OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.  
**Approximate Cost of the work (₹):** ₹ 6271.46 Lakhs, EMD (₹) : 32,85,700/-, **Completion Period of the work :** 12 (Twelve) Months.  
**Date and time of closing of tender :** At 1200 hrs of 14.03.2022.  
 No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
 Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.  
 The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-B/F & F1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.  
**Chief Administrative Officer (Con)/ Bhubaneswar**  
 PR-130/CE/21-22

PANCHAYAT POLLS

Boycott, booth rigging mark 3rd phase

Reports of people boycotting polls, snatching ballot boxes and booth riggings during the third phase of the panchayat elections poured in from many parts of the state



Irate Dongria tribals take away ballot boxes from a booth in Niyamgiri area

OP PHOTO

DONGRIAS SNATCH AWAY BALLOT BOX

**Rayagada:** Irate Dongrias ransacked polling booth no-14 at Railima village under Sunakhandi panchayat on Niyamgiri foothills in this district and snatched away the ballot boxes after they found hundreds of their names missing from the voter list, Sunday. Tension prevailed during the third phase of polling in Kalyansinghpur block under Bissam Cuttack Assembly segment in Rayagada district. Polling was going on peacefully at the booth where villagers of Railima and Dongrias of Tala Ghusudi and Uppar Ghusudi villages were to cast their votes. They were standing in queues when they came to know that their names were missing from the voters' list. Enraged, the Dongria tribals including women, armed with traditional weapons, ransacked the booth and snatched away the ballot boxes. Tehsildar Debashis Kar, Rayagada SDPO Dibyajyoti Das, Kalyansinghpur IIC Sukma Hansda and police force intercepted them on the way and tried to placate the angry Dongrias to return the ballot boxes.

No polling in six Koksara booths

**Koksara:** Angry over alleged under-development of their area, people of Tunagaon in Kandabutra panchayat and Kuturugaon of Amapani panchayat Sunday boycotted polls at six booths in Kalahandi district.

The people of Kuturugaon have been deprived of drinking water, mobile network, healthcare and proper communication. They did not turn up for voting as a mark of protest. People of Tunagaon were angry over the panchayat office being set up at Kandabutra. The people of the two villages had agreed to set up the panchayat office at Tunagaon. But it did not happen. The villagers have moved the court over the issue.

Villagers stop polling party, shun polls

**Baripada:** The third phase of the panchayat elections were conducted peacefully in two blocks of Mayurbhanj, Sunday. However, people of Nursahi of Khanua panchayat under Badasahi block refrained from voting Sunday to protest against lack of basic facilities and development in their area.

According to reports, after polling party reached the village Saturday, the residents did not allow them to open the school door till late Saturday night. As a result, the polling party had to seek accommodation at the panchayat office at night. The polling party accompanied by a platoon of police force reached the booth in the wee hours of Sunday. The police forcibly broke open

the lock and prepared for voting.

However, the villagers did not turn up for voting. They alleged that a primary school of the village has been closed on grounds of poor students' strength. The villagers had opposed it and taken up the issue with the Collector. However, no attention was paid to the villagers' demand.

They also lamented that the village lacks a pucca road and drinking water supply. The villagers staged protests in front of the booth throughout the day and demanded reopening of the school.

Some administrative officials tried to convince the villagers, but they refused to vote. The polling party had to return disappointed.

1,065 voters boycott polls

**Champua/Jhumpura:** Peeved over lack of basic amenities, 1,065 voters of Balabhadrapur under Jhumpura block in Keonjhar shunned polling Sunday.

Reports said, after the dates of panchayat elections were announced, the villagers had announced their decision to boycott polls, as they have been deprived of development and government benefits.

The villagers alleged that they are deprived of rural housing, drinking water supply and road connectivity. They had demanded a check dam across Purunapani creek to boost irrigation. The villagers had several times in the past drawn attention of the people's representatives and the administration on the need of de-

velopment, but no step was taken. Some officials of the administration had approached the villagers to convince them for voting, but the latter were adamant on their stand and refused to exercise their franchise. As many as 1,065 voters refrained from voting.

Three booths in Tihidi 'rigged'

**Bhadrak:** During the third phase of the panchayat elections, booth rigging was alleged at three places under Tihidi block of Bhadrak, Sunday. Reports said, locals have alleged that some people did rigging by closing the doors at booth no-24 and 25 in Saya panchayat, even in the presence of police. This incident triggered tension in the area. At Barikabindha booth of Fatehpur panchayat, polling was stopped for hours due to turbulence. In another case, a woman, who is a former people's representative, had allegedly rigged Badgal booth in Fatehpur panchayat. The woman had cast votes on behalf of many women voters. The BJP workers staged protests and later blocked a road, seeking action against the trouble makers.

Voters write 'NOTA' on ballot papers to vent ire

**SAMBALPUR:** A few voters in this district expressed resentment over various issues prevailing in their areas and refused to vote for any political party. Instead, they wrote 'NOTA' on ballot papers, a photo of which made the rounds on social media Sunday.

A voter from zilla parishad zone-2 under Naktideul block in Sambalpur has written 'None of the above' (NOTA) on four separate ballot papers containing names of candidates to the post of sarpanch, samiti member, zilla parishad member and ward member posts. Interestingly, all the four ballot papers have no option for NOTA, the source added.



It is said that the viral photo was captured on a mobile phone before the ballot paper was dropped in a designated box at polling booth. Later, the photo was shared on social media by two local farmers namely Debendra Pradhan and Sushant Pradhan. Giving their reactions, the duo said, "Irrespective of political parties, every government is indulging in anti-farmer activities. However, the number of NOTA will increase in future, if procurement issues are not sorted out." Meanwhile, Sambalpur Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida has taken the matter seriously.

**REGIONAL OFFICE: BHUBANESWAR**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Bivab Gulmohar, Behera Sahi, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012, Odisha, Ph.: 0674-2421210, Fax: 0674-2421614, Email Id:- rm.orissa@bankofbaroda.co.in

**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**

**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES "APPENDIX - IV - A [See Proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6)]"**  
**E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.**

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Mortgagee(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable properties Mortgagee/charged to the Secured Creditor, **POSSESSION** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" AND "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned accounts. The details of Borrower(s) / Mortgagee(s) / Guarantor(s) / Secured Asset(s) / Dues / Reserve Price / e-Auction Date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below-

Sl. No.	Name & Address of Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) and Mortgagee (s)	Description of Secured Assets with Boundaries	Demand/Possession Notice Date/ Outstanding (Secured Debt.)	Date & Time of e-auction	Reserve Price EMD of the Property Bid Increment	Status of Possession (Symbolic / Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
1.	<b>NAYAPALLI BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) Mr. Narendra Kumar Sahu, 2) Mrs. Jayanti Sahu,</b> Both are at: VIM 635, Vihar, Chandrashekharpur, Bhubaneswar-751021	Equitable Mortgage of Land and Building situated at Khata No.611/875, Stitiban Plot No. 23/2445, Mouza: Chandra shekharpur, Dist.: Khurda, Area 0.040 Dec. in the name of <b>Narendra Kumar Sahu</b> , Bounded by East: Road, West: Road, North: Part of Rev Plot no.2299, South: Rest Part of Rev Plot no.23/2445	06.11.2019 / 18.02.2020 / ₹8,15,328.78 + further interest + Charges incurred	24.03.2022 2.00 PM to 05.00 PM	₹58,80,000/- to ₹5,88,000/- to ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	22.03.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM
2.	<b>NAYAPALLI BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. P K Ores Pvt. Ltd., A/154, 1st Floor, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007, Directors: 1) Mr. Rajesh Kumar Das Pattnaik, 2) Mr. Manas Ranjan Das Pattnaik,</b> Both are At: A/154, 1st Floor, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007 / Guarantors: 1) Mr. Manas Ranjan Das Pattnaik, 2) Mr. Rajesh Kumar Das Pattnaik, 3) Mrs. Sudha Rani Das Pattnaik, 4) Mrs. Rashmi Rekha Das Pattnaik, 5) Mr. Bana Bihari Das Pattnaik, All are At: Plot No.: N3/192, IRC Village, Bhubaneswar-15	Equitable Mortgage of Land and Building situated at Plot No.: 1471/5054, Khata No.: 2193, Mouza: Bhubaneswar Sahar, Unit No.: 17, Nayapalli, P.S: New Capital, Dist: Khurda, Area: Ac 0.083dec., Gharabari Corresponding to Sabik Khata No.: 137, Plot No.: 232, Standing in the name of <b>Manas Ranjan Das Pattnaik &amp; Mr. Rajesh Kumar Das Pattnaik</b> , Bounded By East: Nagaraj Nandan Das, West: Jhula samantray, North: Road, South: Saraswati Das.	20.07.2021 / 09.02.2022 / ₹1,08,38,737.92 + further interest + Charges incurred	24.03.2022 2.00 PM to 05.00 PM	₹1,54,56,000/- to ₹15,45,600/- to ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	22.03.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM
3.	<b>BHUBANESWAR MAIN BRANCH / Borrowers: M/s. Akash Trading Co., At: Plot No.: 503, Vivekananda Marg NageswarTangi, Near Electric Office, Bhubaneswar- 751002, Odisha. Proprietor: Mrs. T. Rashmita Patro,</b> W/o: Mr. T Rabi Kumar Patro, At: Flat No 204, Madhav Nilayam, Lewis Road, Bhubaneswar- 751002/ Guarantor: Mr. T Rabi Kumar Patro, At: Flat No. 204, Madhav Nilayam, Lewis Road Bhubaneswar- 751002	Equitable mortgage of collateral security situated at Khata No.: 998, Plot No.: 60, Area: Ac. 0.540 Dec., Mouza: Kandha Nayagarh, P.S.: Ranapur, P.S. No.: 218, Tahasil: Ranapur, Dist.: Nayagarh standing in the name of <b>Mrs. T Rashmita Patro</b> , Bounded by East: Anabadi, West: Mr. Loknath Sethi North: Road, South: Khetrabasi Sahoo	07.04.2021 / 11.08.2021 / ₹1,32,03,666.94 + further interest + Charges incurred	24.03.2022 2.00 PM to 05.00 PM	₹69,89,000/- to ₹6,98,900/- to ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	22.03.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM
4.	<b>BALIGHAT BRANCH Borrowers: Smt Sushamarani Dash, Ms. Smruti Ranjita Dash, Shri Laxmi Prasad Dash,</b> All are At: Harachandi Sahi, Mahiprakash Matha Lane, Dist.: Puri 752002/ Guarantor: Shri Basanta Kumar Dash, Shri Durga Prasad Dash, At: Hara chandi Sahi, Mahi Prakash Matha Lane, Dist.: Puri-752002	Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building at Plot No.: 250, Khata No.: 216, Mouza: Manikamika, P.S.: Puri Sahar, Unit 10), Sahi, Puri Town (P.S. No.10), Tahasil/Dist.: Puri, Odisha, Area: Ac.0.010 Dec. in the name of <b>Smt. Sushamarani Dash</b> , Bounded by East: Sridhar Mohanty, West: Road, North: Kalia Kanhu Bala, South: Dhadia Khuntia	18.03.2016 / 16.06.2016 / ₹14,03,280.85 + further interest + Charges incurred	24.03.2022 2.00 PM to 05.00 PM	₹11,17,000/- to ₹1,11,700/- to ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	22.03.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM
5.	<b>BALIGHAT BRANCH Borrowers: Mr. Dhanu Pradhan, Mrs. Rojeena Pradhan,</b> Both are At/ PO.: Baliguali, PS.: Puri Sadar, Dist.: Puri-752002	Equitable mortgage of Land & Building at Plot No.: 1132/1887, Khata No.: 521/3013, Mouza: Balukhanda, PO.: Baliguali, PS.: Puri Sadar, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, Area: Ac.0.020 Dec. i.e 871 sq.ft., Kissam: Gharabari, PIN - 752002 in the name of <b>Swagatika Nanda</b> , Bounded by East: Plot No.: 2(P), West: Babita Samal Plot No.: 1, North: Revenue Plot No.: 1077, South: Road	18.03.2016 / 18.06.2016 / ₹5,95,781.14 + further interest + Charges incurred	24.03.2022 2.00 PM to 05.00 PM	₹57,20,000/- to ₹5,72,000/- to ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	22.03.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM
6.	<b>BALIGHAT BRANCH Borrowers: Mr. Pitambar Nanda, Mrs. Swagatika Nanda,</b> Both are At: Tota Behera sahi, PO.: Baliguali, Dist.: Puri-752002	Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building at Plot No.: 1132/1887, Khata No.: 521/3013, Mouza: Balukhanda, PO.: Baliguali, PS.: Puri Sadar, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, Area: Ac.0.020 Dec. i.e 871 sq.ft., Kissam: Gharabari, PIN - 752002 in the name of <b>Swagatika Nanda</b> , Bounded by East: Plot No.: 2(P), West: Babita Samal Plot No.: 1, North: Revenue Plot No.: 1077, South: Road	19.11.2018 / 28.01.2019 / ₹16,52,773/- + further interest + Charges incurred	24.03.2022 2.00 PM to 05.00 PM	₹30,04,000/- to ₹3,00,400/- to ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	22.03.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM
7.	<b>BALIGHAT BRANCH Borrowers: Mr. Sunil Kumar Pati, Mrs. Rashmita Pati,</b> Both are At: Giniribanta Bank Colony, Loknath road, Dist.: Puri-752002	Equitable mortgage of Land & Building Giniribanta Bank Colony, Loknath Road, Puri-752002, Mouza: Sankarpur, Plot No.: 270/457, Khata No.: 102/6 (Shitiban), P.S.: Puri Sadar (P.S No.: 93), Tahasil: Puri, Dist.: Puri, Area: Ac.0.06 Dec. in the name of <b>Mr. Sunil Kumar Pati</b> , Bounded by East: Road, West: Vacant Land, North: Sub Plot No.: 5, South: Sub Plot No.: 6 (P)	09.01.2017 / 17.06.2017 / ₹6,54,854.50 + further interest + Charges incurred	24.03.2022 2.00 PM to 05.00 PM	₹30,88,000/- to ₹3,08,800/- to ₹10,000/-	Symbolic	22.03.2022 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM

**TERMS & CONDITIONS :** The interested bidders shall login [www.mstcecommerce.com](http://www.mstcecommerce.com) to deposit EMD amount online latest on 23.03.2022 by 5.00 PM. For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm>, [www.mstcecommerce.com](http://www.mstcecommerce.com) and <https://ibapi.in>. Also, prospective bidders may contact the Authorized Officer on Tel No.: (0674) 2421210, 7077727060, 7077722155, 7077727032

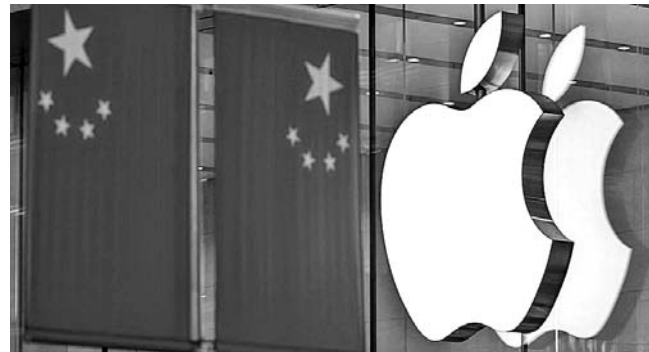
**STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE TO THE BORROWER/ GUARANTOR/ MORTGAGOR FOR SALE UNDER RULE 8(5), 8(6) AND 9(1) AS PER AMENDED SARFAESI ACT 2002**

Place: Bhubaneswar Date: 19.02.2022

Authorised Officer Bank of Baroda

FOCUS US-CHINA TRADE WAR

# GEOPOLITICS OVER ECONOMICS



US policymakers may be tempted, for geopolitical reasons, to reverse the policy of economic engagement with China pursued by successive administrations in the decades following President Richard Nixon's historic 1972 visit. But such a step would carry significant risks

undoubtedly helped to hold down goods prices in Western economies from the 1980s until recently. And throughout the period of America's increased economic engagement with China, there was no secular increase in US unemployment.

Former US President Donald Trump's misguided trade war with China implies a reversal of these trends. By raising tariffs on Chinese imports to the level that prevailed under the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act before World War II, Trump ensured that American households and firms faced higher prices than they otherwise would have. America's trade deficit has widened rather than narrowed, partly because US firms are losing competitiveness in the global market as a result of the trade war.

While US policymakers are tempted, for geopolitical reasons, to end the policy of economic engagement toward China pursued by successive administrations in the decades following Nixon's 1972 visit, the risks are significant. US living standards would likely increase less fast. While Chinese economic growth would suffer, the support for American institutions and ideals among many ordinary Chinese could decline as well. If a US decoupling strategy were to accelerate China's strategic rapprochement with Russia, perhaps even resulting in a formal alliance, a combination of Russia's nuclear arsenal and China's mighty economy could present a more nightmarish challenge to US global hegemony.

Fifty years after Nixon's historic visit, Sino-American relations are at a historic nadir. While finding common ground with China seems challenging in the current geopolitical context, the logic that engaging China in the world can enhance the personal freedom of the Chinese and also provide benefits to American households and firms remains as true as ever.

The writer, a former Chief Economist at the Asian Development Bank, is Professor of Finance and Economics at Columbia Business School and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

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40% of China's exports.

At the time of Nixon's visit, the Chinese government's most important border control policy – as in East Germany then or North Korea now – was to prevent ordinary Chinese from escaping the country for good. In 2019, the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic began, 150 million Chinese tourists visited the United States, Europe, Southeast Asia, and other regions, and returned home voluntarily. The personal freedom ordinary Chinese have now was unimaginable in 1972.

China's transformation has not resulted in Milton Friedman's brand of capitalism, in which the state plays a minimal role in the economy. But China has adopted many regulatory institutions similar to those in Germany, Japan, and even the US. China's Food and Drug Administration, established in 1998, is partly modeled on its US counterpart. And the design of its State Environmental Protection Administration (now called the Ministry of Ecology and Environment) was influenced by that of the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Even China's much-criticised industrial policy took its intellectual inspiration from Alexander Hamilton, who pioneered the concept. The China 2025 programme,

which aims to promote what the Chinese government regards as the industries of the future, resembles not so much Soviet central planning as Germany's Industrie 4.0 initiative or even America's own numerous industrial policies.

So, was Nixon right to help China reconnect with the world? To the extent that his visit and subsequent US policies contributed to China's success in lifting a billion people out of abject poverty, it is difficult to think of another initiative that could have done more to promote human welfare.

Of course, that was not the motivation for Nixon's diplomatic coup, which strengthened America's hand in its struggle with the Soviet Union. But it is equally important – yet somehow often overlooked – that US households and firms have benefited tremendously from China's economic rise.

US exports to China have increased faster than US exports to Europe, Japan, Mexico, Canada, Brazil, or Australia over the last three decades. While imports from China seem to have contributed to a decline in US manufacturing jobs, employment and value added in America's modern service sectors grew faster, because low-cost Chinese products such as laptops and electric equipment boosted efficiency. Cheaper Chinese goods



Shang-Jin Wei

**AMERICA'S TRADE DEFICIT HAS WIDENED RATHER THAN NARROWED, PARTLY BECAUSE US FIRMS ARE LOSING COMPETITIVENESS IN THE GLOBAL MARKET AS A RESULT OF THE TRADE WAR**

February 21, 1972, Richard Nixon became the first US president to visit the People's Republic of China, setting in motion a process that would end China's decades-long isolation and kick-start the emergence of a modern, dynamic economy. But, despite the seismic economic changes in China in the intervening half-century, many in the West regard today's People's Republic as an unreformed communist country whose unfair trade practices are harming Western workers and consumers. Although this impression is partly a by-product of today's geopolitical competition, it also reflects a lack of historical perspective.

At the time of Nixon's visit, China was as isolated and closed off from the world as North Korea is today. Ordinary Chinese had no freedom to choose where to work and had to accept jobs assigned by their local government. Almost every Chinese adult worked for the state or in a state-owned firm, because no privately owned domestic enterprises or foreign firms operated in the country. Nixon's entourage also noticed an astonishing lack of colour on the streets, as most Chinese wore either blue or green. There was not a single foreign brand on the streets of Beijing or Shanghai.

Today, Chinese can choose their place of employment, more than 80% of the workforce is employed by firms not owned by the state, and wages are determined by supply and demand in the labour market. An international tourist cannot tell from people's clothing alone whether she is in Shanghai, Seoul, Tokyo, or Taipei. Virtually all major global brands that can be seen in New York, London, and Singapore, are ubiquitous in major Chinese cities as well.

Apple, Boeing, Caterpillar, Starbucks, and many other foreign companies are currently doing brisk business in China, supporting the returns of US pension and mutual funds that invest in them. General Motors sells more cars in China than in America or any other market. And firms in China that are wholly or majority owned by foreign investors account for

Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down.

THE MOTHER



## Using Ukraine

The frantic appeal for immediate and concrete actions by Western countries made by a desperate Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy amidst continued shelling by pro-Russian separatists shows how perilously close Russia is to invading Ukraine. Zelenskyy was so desperate to save his country that he had flown to Munich for a few hours February 19 despite US advice that he should not leave the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. The sight of Russian speaking Ukrainians in separatists controlled Donetsk boarding buses in hordes to take shelter in Russia fearing being caught in crossfire is yet another tell-tale sign of a Kyiv failure at holding the country together.

Zelenskyy's appeal for immediate intervention by the West not only brings out the precarious situation, but also shows the Western posturing as hypocritical, using the Ukrainians as pawns for their game of merely threatening issuing sanctions against Russia. His emotive question is not wide off the mark. He has a point when he asks what the Western countries are waiting for and underlines the futility of sanctions when Ukraine's economy collapses and "parts of our country are occupied."

Openly confronting Russia which has been warning Ukraine against joining the NATO, Zelenskyy has shown the nerve to make it clear that Ukraine would continue to seek membership in NATO and blamed the West for not being honest about whether it really would welcome Ukraine into the alliance. Western nations have so long been parroting the line that their "doors are open." Zelenskyy hit the bull in the eye when he said such posturing is good, but his countrymen want "open answers" and honesty.

Things appear to be spinning out of control with shells being fired continually February 19-20 in the centre of the separatist-controlled city of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine. The origin of the explosions was not clear. War cry intensifies as UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson says the situation at the Ukraine border where Russia has massed over 1,00,000 troops and the shelling by pro-Russian separatists do suggest a Russian invasion is inevitable and in that case "the biggest war in Europe since 1945 in terms of sheer scale" will break out. Johnson is no Churchill. Similarly, United Kingdom of early 1940s fighting Battle of Britain and United Kingdom of 2022 fighting Russia are not the same. Russia has already won the Ukraine war without firing a single shot. The propaganda blitz launched by Moscow has succeeded in the Battle of Nerves. We are observing one of the greatest examples of modern day warfare. Tanks, aircraft, missiles and soldiers have become show pieces. Real battle ground is now controlled by Artificial Intelligence, robotics, misinformation, cyber attacks and the likes of Slaughterbots.

Reports suggest almost 2,000 ceasefire violations were registered in eastern Ukraine by monitors for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The rebels, ignored by the government at Kyiv for long, are proving to be the Achilles' heel in today's situation. This is a lesson for most nations which have preferred to ignore or suppress sections of their society. The time tested adage that says 'it is with our own luxury, our own folly, our own criminality that we have to contend with the enemy within the gates' seems to have proven true for Ukraine.

The spate of shelling by the rebels in the East has added a new twist in the tension between Moscow and the West over the Russian military buildup near Ukraine. So long, Russia has been sending the message across the world that it has put its troops along Ukraine's border to preempt any strike by the NATO. The USA has not only been insisting but has been repeating daily, like a parrot, that it has intelligence reports suggesting the pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine would be used as a pretext for invasion. From Biden to Kamala Harris to Blinken and anyone known in the present day US administration has been reported as talking about the 'imminent invasion' for the past few weeks. Now, they believe the shelling tends to confirm the Western power's fears.

As if this is not enough, Russia's strategic nuclear forces held exercises amidst the shelling and it was overseen by President Vladimir Putin himself. This, in the eye of the West, is one more indication of Russian troops advancing along Ukraine's border to launch a strike. All the accusations and counter-accusations are part of the well known military strategy of propaganda and lies to prepare the groundwork for attacks. What lends credence to a possible armed confrontation is the fact that separatist leaders urged women and children February 19 to evacuate and able-bodied men to prepare to fight. The upshot of this is that refugees have started frantically boarding buses to Russia and refugee tent camps are popping up across the Russian border.

A humanitarian crisis is staring Ukraine in the face. This is clear from the fear that has gripped the people.

The propaganda warfare going on at the moment proves the undeniable fact that Ukraine is only a testing ground for modern warfare and Russia is on an experimentation trip. Human sufferings do not seem to count as much as the strategic calculations.

WISDOM CORNER

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.

OSCAR WILDE

The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves.

VICTOR HUGO

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it.

ROBERT FROST

WORDSWORTH

Sarcophagus

A sarcophagus has traditionally been a stone coffin, typically adorned with a sculpture or inscription, which is particularly associated with the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Rome and Greece. These days, the materials vary: Kim Jong-il's bier was placed in the mausoleum yesterday where the embalmed body of founding father Kim Il-sung is displayed in a glass sarcophagus (The Irish Times, 21 Dec. 2011). This sounds innocuous enough until you start to explore its word origins, when it takes on the aspect of a third-rate horror story. It is from Greek sark-, flesh, plus -phagos, eating. Flesh-eating stone? The first reference in English to the word is from a translation of the works of the Roman writer Pliny the Elder, who said that the Greeks believed that a type of limestone quarried from an area near Troy would dissolve flesh and so was suitable for making coffins. Pliny is not the most reliable of reporters (he also mentioned dog-headed people and elephants who wrote Greek) and it's more probable that the Greek name was a figurative reference to the speed by which the bodies of those interred in porous limestone coffins decayed to bones.

LOL

Too tired to walk home



his way home.

"Oy Morris," said

grandma, "You've been going to that park for over 30 years! So how could you get lost?"

Leaning close to grandma, so that the policeman couldn't hear, Morris whispered, "I wasn't lost....I was just too tired to walk home."

A police car pulls up in front of grandma Bessie's house, and grandpa Morris gets out. The polite policeman explained that this elderly gentleman said that he was lost in the park...and couldn't find

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

## Hijab is not about freedom of choice

The row over hijab has been raging for over a month now. The fact that young women are protesting to assert their right to wear the hijab is interesting.

This is the 21st century and India's 75th year of Independence, so if young women who have grown up in a society that allows free flow of information and an active social media are seeking to go back in time, it is something that should disturb all.

The controversy flared up when six students of a state government-run pre-university college in Udipi, who were wearing the hijab, were asked to leave the campus January 1. The students addressed a press conference and the matter snowballed into a major issue.

More Muslim students joined the protest, and to counter this, Hindu students started donning saffron scarves. Muslim students petitioned the Karnataka High Court January 31, seeking the right to the wear hijab in classrooms under Articles 14, 19 and 25 of the Constitution.

The court heard the case for the first time February 8 and in its interim order restrained all students from wearing the hijab, saffron shawls, scarves and religious flags

inside the classrooms.

It is pertinent to mention here that the principal of the Udipi college, Rudre Gowda has said: "The institution did not have any rule on wearing the hijab because no one wore it to the classroom in the last 35 years. The students who came with the demand had the backing of some outsiders."

The hijab row may have political and religious connections. It may be a part of a strategy for those trying to create a wedge in the society or a sinister activity to corner the country on the international stage as was evident after Pakistan and the Organisation of Islamic Countries latched on to it. The timing of the controversy is also being questioned as Assembly elections in five states are on, with the Uttar Pradesh polls being regarded as the most critical of the five.

The timeline of the controversy does point to some planned activity behind the scenes. And the fall-out is that the controversy is gradually becoming a 'my religion, your religion' issue. The bracketing of the issue as being sought by the protesting Muslim students can be detrimental to the cause of women and their security. It is this that the courts, the government and the

civil society need to understand.

Making girls wear the hijab and burqa in schools and colleges is an attempt to further deepen the narrative that 'women/girls have to be wrapped up' and that 'covering' them up is for their own 'safety'. Does wrapping up prevent crimes against women? They don't. Crime statistics have repeatedly proven this.

What is needed is the sensitisation of society so that the right and respectful treatment of women is ingrained in every young man. And to achieve this end, schools and colleges are the best places to make a start.

The uniform is a concept that brings a sense of equality, surpassing class, religious and social divisions. Any deviation in this is bound to create a sense of division in budding minds. Isn't it important to teach young people to respect the other gender? Now, if girls are wrapped up in the hijab, burqa or purdah, gender inequalities will only get deeper and reinforce the age-old belief that women are meek and need to be protected. For many, the hijab or burqa are symbols of patriarchy.

The fears are far too deeply embedded and the hijab controversy has in some way touched the raw

nerve of women.

For millions of women across the country, the 'right to hijab' row is not about religious beliefs but is reflective of a deeper tussle within. It is about a conflict over whether to integrate or to stand out, whether to cover up or be attired as one wishes to be, and whether to wrap up every inch of the skin or just be decently dressed.

The conflict is between the freedom to express and the overwhelming sense of fear of being objectified by the other gender. It is about a tussle which has its roots in the thought that a woman's physiology is not about expressing it freely, but about 'sharam' (shame) and 'lehaaz' (manners). Most women do not want to wear either the hijab or the burqa, but it is family or community pressure that prevails upon them.

The protests by young women for the right to wear the hijab have made everyone sit up and take notice. Is it really their choice, or have they succumbed to community pressure and political games? The answers can be conflicting, but the only truth is that the hijab or burqa or purdah can never be the right choice.

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## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Ease restrictions

Sir, After the brutal initial waves of COVID-19, it is a welcome relief that the third wave or the 'Omicron wave' has not caused much damage to the population. Following initial tightening of the now all familiar COVID-related restrictions, most states have opened up. As confidence building measures, restaurants, theatres and malls have opened doors to the patrons almost to their capacity. Others are on their way. Very importantly, children are back to where they belong: the schools. However, one other aspect seems to have been ignored by the states. Domestic interstate travellers are a harrowed lot due to the continuation of restrictions between states. In the preceding COVID waves, many states had a few regulations that remained on paper in the latter part. Now, some states have done away with all restrictions while some have part of those. A pre-departure negative RT-PCR is a must at many states' airports. Certain states are okay with a full vaccination status to be presented before boarding flights. Rail and road travellers are expected to comply with the regulations of the state that they wish to enter. It is high time most of the road, rail, and air checks on COVID-19 are discontinued for the sake of the common man. On the other hand, the double standards of the states are exemplified by their reluctance to reign in those roaming around the streets and public places without a mask on the face. The terms 'social distancing' almost look alien to majority of people in the country. If these two personnel protection fundamentals are ensured, then no other restrictions may be needed.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Farm milestone

Sir, With Prime Minister Narendra Modi launching 'Drone Yatra', an initiative to help agriculture and agriculturists, a milestone has been created in the nation's agriculture history. The PM had flagged off 100 Kisan drones in various states across India creating a revolution linking modern technology and our traditional farming. The PM is apt in saying that though earlier drones were considered only as a weapon of the defence forces and geographical survey, with the inauguration of the 'Kisan Drone Yatra' a new chapter in the technological development of farmers and farming has taken place. The 'Kisan Drone Yatra' no doubt will open various opportunities in the technological field and a new chapter in the direction of modern agricultural facilities of the 21st century.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

# national

## of the day quote

The BJP repealed the farm laws only for votes and it could bring back any law any time

Before 2014, the world did not listen to India, but if India speaks today, then the world listens with open ears

The job of the government is to develop you and we are seeing that the government in Uttar Pradesh is not doing what it should do

## SHORT TAKES

### Woman arrested

**New Delhi:** A 24-year-old woman was arrested for getting her mother killed with help of a man in south Delhi, an official said Sunday. The deceased, identified as Sudha Rani (55), a resident of Madangir in south Delhi, was found lying in a pool of blood at her house Saturday. Furnishing details about the case, Deputy Commissioner Benita Mary Jaiker said information was received February 19, Saturday, that some quarrel or murder has taken place in front of Mart Madangir.

### 1 killed in Delhi

**New Delhi:** A 24-year-old man was charred to death while another received severe burn injuries after a fire broke out in a house in the national capital's Uttam Nagar area Sunday. A Fire Department official said that they received a call about the fire incident around 10.14 a.m. at Phase-V, Om Vihar, Uttam Nagar in west Delhi after which as many as two fire tenders were immediately pressed into service. The deceased was identified as Sahil, a resident of Uttam Nagar Delhi.

### Cartridges seized

**Patna:** A man has been arrested on the charge of smuggling 1,000 live cartridges from Rajauli integrated check-post in Bihar's Nawada district Sunday, the police said. "We were on a regular vehicle checking drive at the Rajauli check-post. We were checking every vehicle. A bus coming from Kolkata via Dhanbad was intercepted at the check-post. During the checking of luggage of the passengers, we found a large number of live cartridges concealed in a cotton bag," police officer A.K. Singh said.

### Criminal held

**New Delhi:** A Mewat-based notorious criminal, wanted in connection with several cases, has been arrested from the national capital, Special Cell of Delhi Police said Sunday. One single shot pistol of .315 bore with four live cartridges were recovered from his possession. The arrested, identified as Rakesh alias Bhandu, was wanted in connection with murder, robbery, rape, assault and kidnapping cases, among others, in Delhi and Haryana.

### Leopard killed

**Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh):** A leopard succumbed to brutal injuries inflicted by locals in the Gangoda Jat village where bamboos were shoved inside the big cat's mouth, causing it to bleed profusely. The leopard's legs were tied and it was thrashed for hours. Videos of the assault have gone viral on social media. According to reports, the leopard was caught in a net surrounding the farm and was beaten up in it.



Fascist forces are dominating the country, there is an atmosphere of fear in the country, media is working under pressure and ED and Income Tax are being misused by the central government

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

## HERBAL GARDENS FOR ELDERLY

A total of 198 'panchvati' herbal parks and gardens are being set up for creating recreational space for the elderly in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh, officials said Sunday



# Time for change: Maha, T'gana CMs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 20:** Change is the need of the hour, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababu Naidu and his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray said after the two leaders met here Sunday as part of efforts to bring together like-minded parties against the BJP at the national level.

After a two-hour meeting at 'Varsha', the official residence of Maharashtra CM, the two leaders addressed a press conference where Rao said this is a "good beginning" and that they will meet again after speaking to leaders of other regional and national parties.

"We discussed the political situation, development issues being faced by the country after 75 years of independence," he said. Thackeray, in a veiled attack on the BJP, said the present day "politics of revenge" was neither Hindutva nor Indian culture, and that the situation needs to be changed.

What is the country's future if such an atmosphere continues, he said, adding that his discussion with Rao revolved around these issues. The country's development is a priority and even states need to have friendly relations with each other, he said.

"The politics of revenge is not good. Instead of speaking on development issues during their tenure, lies and misinformation are spread about the political opponents," he said, without taking any name.

Rao said Thackeray and he agreed that a change was needed in the country. "All should co-exist in harmony," he said. "We will

**Uddhav, in a veiled attack on the BJP, said the present day "politics of revenge" was neither Hindutva nor Indian culture and that the situation needs to be changed**

meet again after speaking to other regional and national parties on the road ahead. The path taken from Maharashtra always leads to success. This is a good beginning and it is a fight for preserving the democracy," he said.

Rao, the founder of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS), said he has invited Thackeray to Hyderabad. "Telangana and Maharashtra share a 1,000-km border. We need to have friendly relations with each other for the development of both states and the country," he said.

Rao, who arrived here following an invitation from Thackeray, said he and the Maharashtra Chief Minister had agreed on issues pertaining to development and the need for structural changes in the country. The Shiv Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' Sunday said the meeting will expedite the process of political unity at the national level against the BJP. Those present in the meeting included Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut, party's spokesperson Arvind Sawant, state ministers Ekmath Shinde, Subhash Desai and Additional Chief Secretary in the CM's office Ashish Kumar Singh.

# Punjab logs 70% voter turnout

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, Feb 20:** The overall voter turnout in Punjab Sunday in a single-phase, multi-cornered contest for the 117-member Assembly seats was approximately 70 per cent, election officials said. Sixty-three per cent of over 2.14 crore voters in Punjab turned out till 5 p.m. amid minor skirmishes and snags in EVMs.

"The voter turnout was 70 per cent with chances of the final figures likely to increase marginally. Rural areas saw high percentage of polling compared to urban ones," an electoral officer said here.

The Malwa region, which has the highest number of 69 seats, saw the highest poll percentage compared to Doaba and Majha regions. Except some incidents of minor clashes, no major poll-related violence has been reported in the state so far. Punjab is witnessing a multi-cornered contest with 1,304 candidates, including 93 women and two transgenders in the fray.

The counting of votes will take place on March 10. The main contest is among the ruling Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD),



Former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, his son and SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal, daughter-in-law and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal, after casting votes for Punjab Assembly polls, in Bathinda

which is contesting the polls in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party after breaking two-decade old ties with the BJP in 2020 over the farm laws. The BJP-Punjab Lok Congress (PLC) alliance is also in the fray, besides the Sanjyot Samaj Morcha, comprising Punjab farmer bodies that had taken part in the agitation against the Centre's now repealed agricultural laws.

Congress leader Sunil Jakhar, who was among the early voters, cast his vote in Panjkosi village in Abohar constituency, while green-

horn Congress candidate Malvika Sood, who is the sister of actor Sonu Sood, cast her vote in Moga, while Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) CM candidate Bhagwant Mann exercised his franchise in Mohali.

Mann is contesting from the Dhuri Assembly seat. Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Badal asked voters to choose carefully.

Ahead of casting his vote, Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi offered prayers to Lord Shiva at a temple in Kharar town. He said the people of Punjab

The Malwa region, which has the highest number of 69 seats, saw the highest poll percentage compared to Doaba and Majha regions

Ahead of casting his vote, Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi offered prayers to Lord Shiva at a temple in Kharar town

have decided to bring the Congress back to power with a huge majority. Talking to media before going to the polling booth to cast his vote in Kharar town, he said, "The position is clear, people want Congress back, and we are heading for a two-third majority." He alleged that the Dera Sacha Sauda in connivance with the BJP has supported the Akali Dal in this Assembly polls. "Dera was responsible for the incidents of sacrilege in Punjab and they are getting their support now in the polling," Channi said. Meanwhile, actor Sonu Sood accused other party candidates of trying to buy votes. However, the Election Commission restrained him from visiting polling stations in Moga over complaints that he was influencing voters.

## SL navy arrests 6 Indian fishermen

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Feb 20:** The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested six Indian fishermen and seized their boat allegedly for poaching in country's territorial waters.

The arrest was made Saturday night near the Kovilan lighthouse, Jaffna. According to information from the Sri Lankan Army website, the fishermen and the boat were captured for crossing the IMBL.

The fishermen were the residents of Nambuthalai in Ramanathapuram district and the boat was owned by a person from Nagapattinam. The fishermen leaders said that they have set sail from Nambuthalai on February 18.

With this incident, 29 fishermen and six fishing boats are under the custody of the Sri Lankan authorities in the month of February alone. PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss called upon the Indian government to hold talks with the Sri Lankan government and to work for the release of fishermen and the boats under the custody of the Sri Lankan authorities.

## 18 cops booked for fake encounter

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shahjahanpur, Feb 20:** A case has been registered against 18 police personnel, including an SP, in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur for an alleged fake encounter.

In October 2004, Dhanpal and Prahlad, both residents of Chachuapur village under Jalalabad police station, were shot dead by police on allegations of being members of the gangster Saragana Naresha Dhimar's gang.

Following the fake encounter, Prahlad's brother Ramkirti had submitted an application in 2012 in the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Court Shahjahanpur, alleging a fake encounter.

Ramkirti's plea was not heard and he went to court. "Chief Judicial Magistrate of Shahjahanpur Abhpal considering the victim family's plea, registered a case a murder case against the then Superintendent of Police Shahjahanpur Sushil Kumar Singh, Additional Superintendent of Police Mata Prasad along with three COs, SOG and 11 SHOs," said Ejaz Hasan Khan, lawyer of the victim.

"Ramkirti, in his application given in the court, alleged that the deceased Dhanpal and Prahlad were working in the field when the police shot them dead. After that, the police hung a gun on their shoulders and tied a box of cartridges around his waist", said the lawyer.

R.K. Singh, Sushil Kumar Singh was among the police officials named in the case. The police have been accused of conducting a fake encounter. Based on the complaint of the victim's family, the court ordered registering a case against 18 police personnel, including the then SP, Additional SP, CO and several SHOs at Jalalabad police station.

## Pak arrests 31 Indian fishermen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Feb 20:** Pakistan's maritime authorities have arrested 31 Indian fishermen and seized five of their vessels for allegedly fishing in the country's territorial waters, officials said Sunday.

The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) said that it apprehended the intruding vessels Friday during patrolling in the Pakistan Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The PMSA said that one of its "ship apprehended five Indian fishing boats along with 31 crew."

The boats were towed to Karachi for further legal proceedings as per Pakistani Law and UN Convention on Law of the Sea, it said. Pakistan and India regularly arrest fishermen from either side for violating the maritime boundary which is poorly marked at some points. Fishermen from Pakistan and India usually end up in jails after they are arrested for fishing illegally in each other's territorial waters.

# NSE fraud: CBI grills Ravi Narain

Earlier, it was speculated that he had fled to London but the CBI source confirmed that Ravi Narain is very much in Mumbai and his statement was recorded

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Feb 20:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Saturday grilled former NSE director Ravi Narain who served as the CEO of NSE before Chitra Ramakrishna in connection with the probe into certain irregularities at the NSE.

Earlier, it was speculated that he had fled to London but the CBI source confirmed that Ravi Narain is very much in Mumbai and his statement was recorded.

"Ravi was asked to join the investigation. He responded to our



summon. He was called at a Mumbai office where he was grilled. He is also a suspect in the case," said the CBI source.

Ravi was too evasive and tried to evade a lot of questions. He also requested that his LOC should be closed. Now CBI will record the statement of Anand Subramanian who was hired in NSE by flouting all rules by Chitra Ramakrishna as a Chief Strategic Advisor.

Chitra Ramakrishna, the ex-MD

Baba, was she given any cut for sharing classified information, if yes, where did she invest the money. The CBI had already issued Look Out Circular (LOC) against Chitra, Anand Subramanian, the former Group Operating official and Ravi Narain, the ex-NSE CEO (before Chitra).

Sources said that Chitra and two others involved in the case were flight risk and hence the LOCs were issued. Arrests in the case is now more likely. The CBI has lodged an FIR against Chitra on the basis of the 192 page report of the SEBI in which she has been accused of leaking classified information to a Yogi Baba who lived in the Himalayas.

"There was a flight risk, there were possibilities that they may flee abroad and taking preventive steps we issued the LOC," sources had said.

On February 17, the Income Tax Department had conducted raids at the house of Chitra in Mumbai and Chennai during which incriminating documents were recovered.

# EC restores number of star campaigners as cases wane

NOW, RECOGNISED NATIONAL AND STATE PARTIES CAN FIELD A MAXIMUM OF 40 STAR CAMPAIGNERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** Citing the decline in Covid-19 cases, the Election Commission Sunday restored the number of star campaigners a party can field for campaigning in the ongoing polls in five states.

Now, recognised national and state parties can field a maximum of 40 star campaigners. Other parties which are registered but not recognised can now have 20 star campaigners.

The Commission had in October 2020 reduced the number of star campaigners for recognised na-



tional and state parties from 40 to 30, as large gatherings were witnessed during campaigning in Bihar assembly elections and by-

polls in several states amid the coronavirus pandemic. For unrecognised registered political parties, the maximum num-

ber of star campaigners was brought down to 15 from 20. "The numbers of both active and new COVID-19 cases are receding and the restrictions put in place both by the central government and state governments to check the spread of pandemic are being lifted gradually...The Election Commission after due deliberation has decided to restore the maximum limit on number of star campaigners..." it said in a letter to political parties.

The letter said now the maximum limit on the number of star campaigners for recognised na-

tional and state political parties "shall be 40 and for other than recognised political party it shall be 20."

It said for both phases of Manipur assembly polls, phase 5, 6 and 7 of Uttar Pradesh elections and assembly bypoll to Majuli seat in Assam, the list of additional star campaigners can be submitted to the Election Commission or the concerned Chief Electoral Officer by 5 PM on February 23.

The expenditure of star campaigner is borne by the party and not the candidate or candidates for which he or she campaigns.

# RJD snubs Cong in Bihar legislative council polls

The development came barely a day after Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra came out in support of Lalu Prasad, who is in jail after conviction in yet another fodder scam case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Feb 20: Lalu Prasad's RJD has slammed its doors shut on the possibility of any understanding with the Congress, its estranged ally, for elections to 24 seats of the legislative council in Bihar.

State RJD president Jagadanand Singh Saturday announced its candidates for 20 seats, having done the same for 21 others a week ago, and declared that it was leaving one for the Left parties.

Elections to the two dozen seats, vacant for quite some time, are expected in March or April.

The development came barely a day after Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra came out in support of Prasad, who is in jail after conviction in yet another fodder scam case.

He was held guilty in the Doranda Treasury case by a special CBI court at Ranchi February 15.

Three days later, Vadra came out with a tweet in Hindi, alleging that Prasad was a victim of BJP's political vendetta and praying for justice to the septuagenarian leader.

Prasad's son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav promptly replied



with a 'thank you'.

Speculations were rife that the exchange of niceties in the virtual world would be followed by a softening of stance by the RJD, which says it is committed to supporting the Congress 'at the Centre' though finding it no longer worthy of an electoral collaboration in the state.

Ties between the RJD and Congress are two decades old, and Prasad's loyalists keep reminding those in the grand old party that their leader had come out in support of Sonia Gandhi when she was facing stiff opposition on account of her foreign origin.

The two parties, along with the CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML) had formed a Grand Alliance to contest the 2020 assembly polls.

The RJD returned with the highest tally for any party in the state and the Left also performed beyond expectations, though the five-party formation fell short of majority.

The blame was apportioned on

the Congress, which contested 70 seats but won fewer than 20, and RJD leaders have been accusing its junior ally of having been "not serious" in the assembly elections.

They have been pointing out that Vadra did not canvas in Bihar at all despite having been named a star campaigner while Rahul Gandhi took time off for only half a dozen rallies, though Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a far greater number of election meetings.

A flashpoint was reached when in October last year the RJD took a unilateral decision to contest by-polls for two assembly seats, saying it did not want to lose the contest by leaving either seat for the Congress.

The RJD lost both seats, while the Congress has been licking its wounds, alleging that the Grand Alliance was taken apart by the domineering ally and threatening to go it alone in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

# Assam, Arunachal to resolve border disputes

Assam's border dispute cases with Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh are before the Supreme Court but there are no cases on the inter-state disputes with Meghalaya and Mizoram

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Itanagar, Feb 20: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Arunachal Pradesh counterpart Pema Khandu Sunday said that they would start the process from April to resolve the long pending disputes along the 804 km inter-state border of the two states.

Sarma and Khandu Sunday attended the 50 years celebration programme of Arunachal Pradesh and 36th statehood day at Naharlagun. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed the event from Delhi and said that his government is working with full force to make Arunachal a major gateway to East Asia.

Sarma, while addressing the function, informed that Assam and Arunachal Pradesh governments would sit together from April to resolve border disputes. He hoped that the majority of border problems would be solved this year. "Border issues can only be solved amicably and through dialogue between all stakeholders," he asserted.

The Assam Chief Minister requested Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, who is a Lok Sabha Member from Arunachal, to work as a leader of team northeast so that the entire region can play a vital role in development of the country.

Saying that legendary musician



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu and others, during the 36th Statehood Day programme of Arunachal Pradesh, in Naharlagun.

of Assam, Dr Bhupen Hazarika's songs have reflected the beauty of Arunachal and eulogised the bonhomie among the people of both states, Sarma recalled how Assamese stalwarts like Indira Miri, Annanda Prasad Borthakur made immense contributions for the social and educational development of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister echoed his Assam counterpart and thanked Sarma for initiating the process to resolve the inter-state border disputes.

Till 1972, Arunachal Pradesh was known as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and it

was administered by the External Affairs Ministry with the Assam Governor acting as agent to the President of India.

January 20, 1972, the state gained Union Territory status and was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh and it became a full-fledged state February 20, 1987.

Meanwhile, the Assam Chief Minister and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad K. Sangma recently met Union Home minister Amit Shah in Delhi and apprised him about the efforts being made to resolve six of the 12 inter-state border disputes between the two north-eastern states.

Assam's border dispute cases with Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh are before the Supreme Court but there are no cases on the inter-state disputes with Meghalaya and Mizoram. Recently, Assam and Nagaland had signed an agreement to remove state forces from the disputed locations.

Sarma recently discussed an out-of-court settlement of the boundary disputes with Pema Khandu. The worst-ever violence along the Assam-Mizoram border July 26 last year left six Assam Police personnel dead and nearly 100 civilians and security personnel of the two neighbouring states injured.

# 'Greater Tripaland' demand likely to dominate state polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Feb 20: The 'Greater Tripaland' separate statehood demand seeking to carve out tribal areas of Tripura is likely to dominate the political discourse in the Assembly elections in the north-eastern state due early next year.

The Tripura Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance or TIPRA Motha, a regional political party led by royal scion Pradyot Kishore Debbarma, seeks a separate state for the indigenous people of Tripura.

The party swept the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) elections held in April last year, winning 18 of the 28 seats over the 'Greater Tripaland' demand in a direct contest with the ruling BJP-IPFT alliance. The statehood demand may affect results in 20 Assembly seats, where tribals hold considerable clout electorally, in the 60-member House.

Debbarma said that his party is willing to forge an alliance with any national party that provides a constitutional solution to the demand of the indigenous people of the Tripura, who form one-third of the state's estimated 40 lakh population and live in the tribal council area, which constitutes two-thirds of the state's territory.

'Greater Tripaland' is essentially an extension of ruling partner Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura's demand for 'Tripaland', a separate state for tribals by carving out the TTAADC area.

However, the new demand seeks to include every tribal living inside and outside the TTAADC area. The 'Greater Tripaland' idea does not restrict only to Tripura, and seeks to also include Tripuris living in Assam, Mizoram, and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.

However, the royal scion has

## Statehood demand

The statehood demand may affect results in 20 Assembly seats, where tribals hold considerable clout electorally, in the 60-member House

All major political parties in the state including the ruling BJP, opposition CPI(M) and Congress, have rejected the demand on several occasions, calling it 'separatist and divisive'

If 'Greater Tripaland' state is formed, tribals, who form one-third of the population will control two-thirds of the territory, and non-tribals, who form two-thirds of the population, will have to settle with only one-third of Tripura's area

never clarified if his demand for 'Greater Tripaland' seeks to redraw the territorial boundaries of Tripura or whether the proposed state's map also includes parts of Assam, Mizoram and Bangladesh.

The party wants the Centre to discuss their demand, but has not received any response so far.

"We want a constitutional solution to our demand, which only the central government can provide. It is not possible to solve our problem by sanctioning any financial package only," Debbarma told PTI.

He said that his party's motto is to empower the tribal community but it is not against any other community. "Many Bengalis live in the tribal council area. We want them to live in peace and harmony. In the princely state of Tripura, Bengalis and tribals lived peacefully and we want to maintain that tradition," he said. The princely state, which was ruled by tribal kings for about 500 years, joined the Indian union in 1949.



## CANINE CARNIVAL



Participants with their pets during a dog show organised by Bihar Animal Sciences University, in Patna, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

# Statehood day: PM, CM wish Mizos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, Feb 20: Mizoram turned 35-years-old as a state Sunday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief minister Zoramthanga greeted people on the occasion.

However, no official function was organised to celebrate the day as it fell Sunday. The formalisation of

Mizoram state took place on this day in 1987, a year after a peace accord was signed between the Union government and Mizo National Front (MNF), an erstwhile underground organisation. The accord was inked after 20 years of insurgency.

"Greetings to the people of Mizoram on their Statehood Day. India takes great pride in the vibrant

Mizo culture and the contributions of Mizoram to national progress. I pray for the good health and well-being of the people of Mizoram," the prime minister said in a tweet.

The chief minister urged people to celebrate the day in their own respective places as no official function could be held as it is Sunday.

# Bank officer transforms lives of ragpicker girls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Feb 20: Ragpickers, slum dwellers and orphan children in Bihar's Danapur, for whom attending school was always a distant dream, can now complete their education with the help of an NGO called 'Nai Dharti'.

Sister Nivedita Girls' School run by 'Nai Dharti' in Maner block of Danapur's Sarai village is providing free education to 100 underprivileged girls who cannot even afford school supplies.

In a bid to educate disadvantaged girl children in the state, this NGO, run by Nandita Banerjee a former bank manager, is providing free stationery kit, uniforms to encourage girls to go to school and hone their hidden talents like painting, dancing. Most of these young ragpickers would gaze longingly at kids clad in starched uniforms, walking to school every morning. But now they can materialise their

dreams of completing secondary education as they can live in the school boarding free of cost.

Nandita, who is also the secretary of 'Nai Dharti', told IANS that seeing young girls toiling for hours in the rubbish dumps to make a living, prompted her to drive a paradigm shift in the field of education.

"Even while working in a bank, I used to do philanthropic work, but later I realised that it is not enough to help elders. Something should be done for the underprivileged children too," she said.

After this, Nandita quit her job and started working for homeless children. She decided to open schools for impoverished girls and started 'Nai Dharti' in 2011.

"At least 5 girls first came to us in 2009. We opened the school in 2011. The institution received recognition till Class 8 in 2013," she said.

For the first time in 2020, five girls from the school passed their 10th board exam, conducted by the



Bihar Board of Open Schooling and Examination.

Tanu Kumari, who secured 79 per cent marks in her Class 10 boards, is a 12th grade student today. She aspires to become a doctor, and is a hosteller here. Tanu's father died due to alcohol-related causes while her mother is behind the bars for the last two years for selling liquor.

"This story is not just about one Tanu. There were many such girls, who thought school was a distant dream, due to poverty. But today they have matriculated," Nandita said.

According to Nibha Kumari, who matriculated recently, this education has helped her break free from the shackles of poverty. If it

was not for Nandita's pledge to sponsor their education, she would have been begging or ragpicking. But today, she dreams of becoming a doctor and engaging in philanthropic work to help those still wallowing in the fringes of society.

Talking about the facilities provided by her organisation, Nandita, said: "The school has a computer lab and science lab. We are making a lot of effort to hone these kids in things they are good at."

"Recently, two girls here won awards in painting. These children are being taught to turn their weaknesses into strengths."

However, Nandita does not take any help from the government. She runs her NGO from the donations received from other organisations. Her husband Ratindra Kumar Banerjee has also joined her in her work. Though they initially faced financial trouble, a lot of people have now come forward to support them.



CONRAD K. SANGMA | MEGHALAYA CM

The current trend suggests that the election might not be free and fair. Hence, we have demanded deployment of additional central paramilitary forces in Manipur especially in the vulnerable areas

in the state, Sangma said that such attacks prove that the party is growing stronger.

The NPP the dominant party of the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government, has been an ally of the BJP in both the northeastern states (Meghalaya and Manipur) since 2017, but in the current

Assembly elections both the parties are contesting against each other. The NPP has put up 28 candidates while the BJP has fielded its candidates in all the 60 seats in the Manipur elections. Polling to the 60-member assembly will take place in two phases on February 27 and March 5. Votes will be counted on March 10.



of the day quote

Operations of passenger aircraft from Agartala airport to two important Bangladesh cities -- Dhaka and Chittagong -- would be started soon

The small-time leaders who ditched the saffron party are now struggling to secure seats

Problems of the people have multiplied over the years with the major brunt being faced by the educated, unemployed section of society due to burgeoning unemployment rate

SHORT TAKES

Jawan ends life

New Delhi: A 31-year-old Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) jawan deployed for security duty at the Teen Murti Bhavan here allegedly shot himself dead Sunday using his service rifle, officials said.

Girl gangraped

Jashpur: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly abducted and raped by five men while she had gone to attend a marriage function at a village in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district, police said Sunday.

Naxal killed

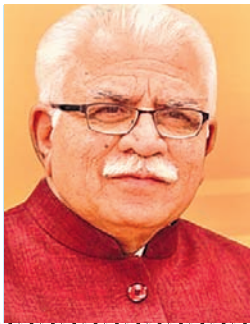
Dantewada: A Naxal carrying a reward of ₹5 lakh on his head and accused in a number of violent incidents was killed in an encounter with police in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, an official said Sunday.

1 killed, 5 hurt

Muzaffarnagar: One person was killed and five others were injured, one of them seriously, on Sunday after their car fell into a ditch along the Purkazi bypass while returning from a wedding, officials said.

Student kills self

Sehore: A 17-year-old student of Class 12 allegedly committed suicide at his home in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district, police said Sunday.

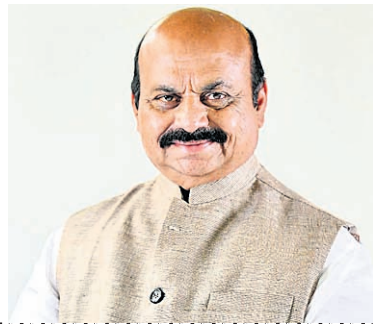


Keeping in mind the vision of modern Haryana, this time the state Budget will give priority to promises made to the people

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CM

AMBITIOUS PLAN

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said Sunday that an ambitious plan has been drafted to introduce 'Tunga Aarti' on the banks of Tungbhadra River at Harihar



PM recalls Ahmedabad blasts, slams SP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hardoi (UP), Feb 20: Days after a court convicted 49 people for the Ahmedabad serial blasts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday said he had vowed to punish the perpetrators even if they took refuge in 'paatal', and accused the Samajwadi Party of being sympathetic to such terrorists.

Addressing a BJP campaign rally in Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh, Modi slammed the Samajwadi Party for being sympathetic towards terrorists and claimed that the previous government headed by it had sought to withdraw cases against several terror accused.

Modi said, "When I was the chief minister of Gujarat, the Ahmedabad serial bomb blasts took place. I can never forget that day when the earth was reddened by the blood of the victims of the serial blasts. There were uncontrolled tears. I picked up the blood-soaked soil and took a 'sankalp' (vow) that my government will track these terrorists, even from 'paataal' (netherworld), and pun-



I remained silent for so many years because the hearing on the Ahmedabad blasts case was going on. Today, when the court has given them the punishment, I am raising the subject before the country

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

ish them."

"I remained silent for so many years because the hearing on the Ahmedabad blasts case was going on. Today, when the court has given them the punishment, I am raising the subject before the country," he told the rally.

On February 18, a special court in Ahmedabad had sentenced to

death 38 members of the terror outfit Indian Mujahideen in the 2008 serial blasts case. The court also sentenced 11 other convicts to life imprisonment.

"Those who wanted to destroy us -- the Indians -- have been punished by the court... You all know that when there is a terrorist attack and when terrorism increases, the

Addressing a BJP campaign rally in Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh, Modi slammed the Samajwadi Party for being sympathetic towards terrorists and claimed that the previous government headed by it had sought to withdraw cases against several terror accused

maximum loss is borne by the poor and the middle class. The life of common people, trade and tourism are affected following a terror attack," he said.

"Today, I am referring to this, because some political parties have become kind of the terrorists. The blasts were done in two ways. The first one was done in the city at 50-60 places, and then after two hours, a blast took place in a vehicle in a hospital, as relatives, officials and leaders would be going there. A number of people also died there," he said and added that it was perhaps for the first time that blasts took place in hospitals.

Mocking the Samajwadi Party

and its election symbol 'bicycle', Modi said, "...In the initial blasts, the bombs were kept on cycles...I wonder why they (terrorists) opted cycles."

The prime minister said when the Samajwadi Party came to power in Uttar Pradesh its government tried to withdraw a case against Shamim Ahmed who was an accused in the bomb blasts in Sankat Mochan Temple and Cantt railway station in Varanasi in 2006.

"In 2007, blasts took place in court premises in Ayodhya and Lucknow. In 2013, the Samajwadi government withdrew the case against Tariq Kazmi. But the court did not allow the conspiracy of the Samajwadi government to work and he was given life imprisonment," Modi said.

"In 14 cases pertaining to terror attacks in UP, the Samajwadi government ordered the withdrawal of cases lodged against many terrorists. These people were indulging in explosions, and the Samajwadi government did not allow these terrorists to be prosecuted," he said.

INDIA LOGS 19,968 NEW COVID CASES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 20: In the last 24 hours, India logged 19,968 new Covid-19 cases and 673 deaths, the Union Health Ministry said Sunday.

The new fatalities increased the overall death toll to 5,11,903. The active Covid caseload has reduced to 2,24,187 which constitute 0.52 per cent of the country's total positive cases. The recovery of 48,847 patients in the last 24 hours has increased the cumulative tally to 4,20,85,383. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.28 per cent, according to the Ministry.

Also in the same period, a total of 11,87,766 tests were conducted across the country, which took the overall to 75.93 crore. While the weekly positivity rate currently stood at 2.27 per cent, the daily positivity rate increased to 1.68 per cent.

With the administration of over 30.81 lakh vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's Covid inoculation coverage reached 175.37 crore as of Sunday morning. This has been achieved through 1,98,72,555 sessions.

RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION



Hindu devotees gather to take a holy dip in river Ganges at Sangam in Prayagraj

PTI PHOTO

9 KILLED IN RAJASTHAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (Rajasthan), Feb 20: Nine people, including the bridegroom, were killed after a car carrying a wedding party fell into the Chambal river here in the early hours of Sunday as the driver lost control of the vehicle due to drowsiness, police said.

They were on their way to Madhya Pradesh for the wedding in a Maruti Ertiga, they said. The state government has announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh for the dependents of the deceased and ₹5 lakh for families that have lost two or more members in the accident.

The car fell into the river from a bridge early in the morning in Nayapura police station area after the driver lost control of the vehicle due to drowsiness, Superintendent of Police (city) Kesar Singh Shekhawat said. He said police received information about the accident around 7.50 am, following which a rescue operation was launched.

Initially, seven bodies were pulled out from the car that had plunged seven-eight feet into the water. Two more bodies were recovered later, Shekhawat said. The wedding party was going from Chauth Ka Barwara village in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district to Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, he said.

SURGE IN TICKETLESS TRAVEL IN FIRST 9 MONTHS OF 2021-22

According to Railways data, there has been a significant increase in the number of passengers availing train services from 2019-2020 to 2021-22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 20: The Railways caught more than 1.78 crore ticketless passengers, and those with unbooked luggage, in the first nine months of 2021-22, a jump of around 79 per cent from the non-Covid-hit fiscal of 2019-2020, according to an RTI response.

During the coronavirus impacted fiscal of 2020-21, when severe restrictions on traffic movement were in place, the number of such passengers stood at 27 lakh. The data was made available by the Railway Board in response to the RTI query



filed by Madhya Pradesh-based activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur.

The RTI response also revealed that during April-December 2021, more than 1.78 crore passengers were detected travelling without ticket/with improper ticket and

unbooked luggage. An amount of ₹1,017.48 crore was realised from them as fine, it said.

Sources indicated that one of the major reasons for such a surge in ticketless travel is the fact that even now, when most of the Covid restrictions have been lifted, many express and superfast trains have only online booking and limited services.

As for the 2019-2020 fiscal, which was not impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, 1.10 crore people were caught travelling ticketless and a total fine of ₹561.73 crore was recovered from them.

FIR filed against Wankhede

THE FIR AGAINST SAMEER WANKHEDE WAS LODGED AROUND 8 PM SATURDAY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Feb 20: The Maharashtra Police have filed an FIR against Sameer Wankhede, the controversial former NCB Zonal Director (Mumbai) at the Kopri police station of Thane district for getting a liquor license for his bar by allegedly furnishing false information.

The FIR against Sameer Wankhede was lodged around 8 p.m. Saturday.

"Wankhede is the owner of Sadguru Family Restaurant and Bar, which is situated in Vasi. On October 29, 1997 the liquor license to serve liquor at a bar was obtained. Mr Wankhede allegedly furnished fake information regarding his date of birth. At the time



when the liquor licence was obtained, Wankhede was 17 years and eleven months old whereas to

get the liquor license one should be a major," said a source.

In November, Nawab Malik, the NCP leader and Maharashtra government minister, had levelled allegations against Sameer Wankhede. He had said that Sameer ran a restaurant and a bar in the Vasi area of Navi Mumbai, but he got the license to serve liquor by furnishing false information.

Earlier, in this row the national commission for Scheduled Caste had said that an FIR should be lodged against Nawab Malik. The Commission had said that it was Wankhede who was being harassed.

Now, the row has escalated as Wankhede has been booked by the Thane Police. Wankhede is currently posted with DRI.



Silence is golden

These days, the Enforcement Directorate and Income tax department have been making headlines as raids are being conducted day-in and day out. But the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), CBI, National Investigation Agency (NIA) and others are

quiet. These agencies are silent as if nothing is happening around. For them silence is golden. Remember the infamous Mundra Port's ₹21000 crores heroin smuggling scandal that hit the headlines in September 2021. It was the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) that had seized 2988.21 kg heroin at Adani-owned Mundra Port in Gujarat. But the case was quietly transferred to NIA under the Union Home Ministry though it had no terror link. The Gujarat Police, DRI, NCB were kept out though the DRI had told the government that another huge consignment of semi processed talc stones were cleared through Mundra Port during June. Even that case was taken away from the DRI. But the

NIA failed to reveal the big fish behind the biggest-ever smuggling scandal though ten persons have been arrested. Even parties and leaders who accuse the government day in and day out are silent on the issue.

What's cooking inside CBI?

Ever since Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, an IPS officer of Maharashtra cadre, took over as Director CBI, rules have changed. For Jaiswal, silence is golden. He is a nameless and faceless Director and turned CBI's headquarters into a fortress. Gone are the days when directors used to meet the media

informally on important issues. The intended objective of the drive is to check unauthorized leakage of the information and also secure the agency's offices and its headquarters. The CBI has now upgraded its security wing under a DIG rank officer belonging to Gujarat cadre. All officers have been debarred from keeping pen drives, Chip-Based Access Cards or even talking to outsiders on phone or otherwise.

Mysterious case of Jacqueline

The ED may be after Punjab Chief Minister's nephew in the mining case but going at a snail's pace in the actor

Jacqueline Fernandez case. Her name surfaced in the illegal pay-off case involving conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar who extorted ₹200 crores. The ED has information that Sukesh sent gifts worth over ₹10 crore to the 36-year-old actor while he was in jail. Later, he managed to get out of jail and booked a chartered flight for Jacqueline from Mumbai to Chennai and they stayed together at a hotel in Chennai for two days. The ED also suspects that a huge amount of money which Sukesh extorted from a businessman's wife, was diverted to Jacqueline Fernandez. She has been grilled three times by the ED but no word has come out what happened.

Only 1% Kashmiri Pandits rehabilitated

For the past 30 years, the BJP had been beating the drum that if it came to power, it would rehabilitate lakhs of Hindus who had fled the Valley and Jammu after the violence in the 90s. This was BJP's main plank also. After seven years in power at the Centre and also ruling the state for a fair amount of period, what has been the achievement? Of the 1,54, 712 Kashmiri Migrants who fled from the Valley in the 90s, only 1697 such persons have been rehabilitated so far. This is around one per cent of the population that was forced to flee the Valley.

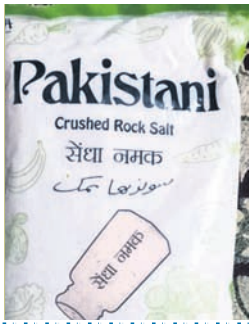
# international



**Evidence suggests that Russia is planning the biggest war in Europe since 1945**  
BORIS JOHNSON | UK, PM

## DEBATE OVER SALT

Hundreds of Pakistanis and Indians engaged in a debate on the "Pakistani Crushed Rock Salt" following a post shared on a Facebook group regarding the product. Suraj Jain from Jalandhar shared photos of the product on the India Pakistan Heritage Club group's Facebook page with the caption: "Dear Pakistani friends. Hum aapka NAMAK khate hai (we eat your salt)!!!!"



## of the day quote

The kingdom was looking to schedule a fifth round of direct talks with rival Iran despite a lack of substantive progress  
**FAISAL BIN FARHAN AL-SAUD** | FOREIGN MINISTER, SAUDI

Hungary's government hopes inflation will ease back below 6% by the end of 2022 paving the way for a phasing out of price caps on basic foods, fuel and mortgages  
**VIKTOR ORBAN** | HUNGARY, PM

The Cypriot government has moved away from pushing for European Union (EU) sanctions on Turkey for actions violating the sovereign rights of Cyprus on land and in the eastern Mediterranean  
**IOANNIS KASOULIDES** | MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CYPRUS

## SHORT TAKES

### Brazil floods: Death toll climbs to 146

**Brasilia:** The death toll from landslides and floods that occurred last week in the city of Petropolis in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state has increased to 146, the Civil Defense has said. The number of missing stands at 191, with 24 people rescued since February 15, *Xinhua* news agency quoted the Civil Defense as saying. Attempts to find survivors under the mountains of mud that swept through neighbourhoods were temporarily suspended Saturday due to more rain and the risk of further landslides. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro flew over the region on Friday and described what he saw as a "war scene".

### One killed, 5 hurt in park shooting

**Portland:** One person was killed and five others were wounded in a shooting at a park in Portland, authorities said. The Portland Police Bureau said officers responded to a report of shots fired at Normandale Park Saturday at about 8 p.m. Arriving officers found one woman dead, and two men and three other women were taken to the hospital, police said. Their conditions were not immediately known. Police have not named anyone involved in the shooting.

### Officer killed in police chopper crash

**Newport (US):** One officer was killed and another officer was critically injured after a Huntington Beach police helicopter crashed in water near California's coast, authorities said. The helicopter crash-landed Saturday at about 6:30 pm while responding to a disturbance near Newport Beach, the Huntington Beach Police Department said. Nicholas Vella, 44, a 14-year veteran with the police department, died in the crash, Police Chief Eric Parra said in a news conference Saturday night. The second officer, who is a 16-year veteran with the department, was taken to the hospital in critical condition. The second officer was not named.

### Israel to allow unjabbed tourists

**Jerusalem:** Israel announced Sunday that it would allow unvaccinated tourists to enter the country beginning next month as the latest wave of the coronavirus recedes. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that foreign tourists, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, would be required to take PCR coronavirus tests before their flights and upon landing.

# UKRAINE APPEALS FOR CEASEFIRE

AGENCIES

**Kyiv (Ukraine), Feb 20:** Russia extended military drills near Ukraine's northern borders Sunday amid increased fears that two days of sustained shelling along the contact line between soldiers and Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine could spark an invasion. Ukraine's president appealed for a cease-fire.

The exercises were originally set to end Sunday and brought a sizable contingent of Russian forces to Belarus. The presence of the Russian troops raised concern that they could be used to sweep down on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, a city of about 3 million people less than a three-hour drive away. "We're talking about the potential for war in Europe," US Vice President Kamala Harris said Sunday at a security conference in Munich, Germany. "It's been over 70 years, and through those 70 years... There has been peace and security." A top European Union official, Charles Michel, said: "The big question remains: does the Kremlin want dialogue?"

"We cannot forever offer an olive branch while Russia conducts missile tests and continues to amass troops," said Michel, the president of the European Council.



Civilians listen to an instructor during a training of members of a Ukrainian far-right group in Kyiv, Ukraine  
PTI PHOTO

**CRISIS DEEPENS**

- Western leaders warned that Russia was poised to attack its neighbor, which is surrounded on three sides by about 150,000 Russian soldiers, warplanes and equipment. Russia held nuclear drills Saturday as well as the conventional exercises in Belarus, and has ongoing naval drills off the coast in the Black Sea
- The United States and many European countries have alleged for months that Russia is trying to create pretexts to invade. They have threatened massive, immediate sanctions if it does

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called Saturday on Russian President Vladimir Putin to choose a place where the two leaders could meet to try to resolve

the crisis and Sunday appealed for a cease-fire on Twitter. Russia has denied plans to invade, but the Kremlin had not responded to Zelenskyy's offer to meet by Sunday

and it was Belarus — not Russia — that announced the extension of the drills. NATO has estimated there are 30,000 Russian troops in Belarus.

After a call with French President Emmanuel Macron, Putin blamed Ukraine for the escalation at the contact line and NATO for "pumping modern weapons and ammunition" into Ukraine. The Kremlin statement mentioned a cease-fire only in passing and made no mention of Zelenskyy's call for a meeting.

In Kyiv, life continued seemingly as usual Sunday, with brunches and church services in full swing. Katerina Spanchak, who fled the separatist-occupied Lugansk region years ago, said she prayed for peace. "We are people, we all love life, and we are all united by our love of life. We should appreciate it every day. That's why I think everything will be fine," Spanchak said outside services at St. Michael's monastery. But in Lugansk, the area of eastern Ukraine where her parents still live, and neighbouring Donetsk, separatist leaders ordered a full military mobilization and sent more civilians to Russia, which has issued about 700,000 passports to residents of the rebel-held territories. Claims that Russian citizens are being endangered might be used as jus-

tification for military action.

Officials in the separatist territories claimed Ukrainian forces launched several artillery attacks over the past day and that two civilians were killed during an unsuccessful assault on a village near the Russian border. Ukraine's military said two soldiers died in firing from the separatist side on Saturday.

Ukraine's leader criticized the U.S. And other Western nations for holding back on new sanctions for Russia. Zelenskyy, in comments before the conference, also questioned the West's refusal to allow Ukraine to join NATO immediately. Putin has demanded that NATO reject Ukraine as a member. U.S. President Joe Biden said late Friday that based on the latest American intelligence, he was now "convinced" that Putin has decided to invade Ukraine in coming days and assault the capital.

A U.S. Military official said an estimated 40% to 50% of the ground forces surrounding Ukraine had moved into attack positions closer to the border. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal U.S. Assessments, said the change had been underway for about a week and did not necessarily mean Putin was committed to an invasion.

## Canada's protests settle down, but could echo in politics



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Toronto, Feb 20:** Most of the streets around the Canadian Parliament are quiet now. The Ottawa protesters who vowed never to give up are largely gone, chased away by policemen in riot gear. The relentless blare of truckers' horns has gone silent.

But the trucker protest, which grew until it closed a handful of Canada-US Border posts and shut down key parts of the capital city for weeks, could echo for years in Canadian politics and perhaps south of the border. "I think we've started something here," said Mark Sutor, a 33-year-old protester from Hamilton, Ontario, speaking as police retook control of the streets around Parliament. Protesters had essentially occupied those streets for more than three weeks, embarrassing Trudeau and energizing Canada's far right. Sutor believes the protests will divide the country, something he welcomes.

## India-China ties in very difficult phase, says MEA

AGENCIES

**Munich, Feb 20:** India's relationship with China is right now going through a "very difficult phase" after Beijing violated agreements not to bring the military forces in the border, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said, emphasising that the "state of the border will determine the state of the relationship".

Speaking at a panel discussion Saturday at the Munich Security Conference (MSC) 2022 here, Jaishankar said that India was having a problem with China along the Line of Actual Control.

"Now, the state of the border will determine the state of the relationship. That's natural. So obviously, the relations with China right now are going through a very difficult phase," he added.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas and both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry. The tension escalated following a deadly clash in the

Galwan Valley June 15, 2020.

Jaishankar, who was in Melbourne last week, had said that the situation at the LAC has arisen due to the disregard of written agreements by China in 2020 not to mass soldiers at the border and noted that Beijing's actions have become an issue of "legitimate concern" for the entire international community. "When a large country disregards written commitments, I think it's an issue of legitimate concern for the entire international community," he had said in response to a question during a joint press conference with his Australian counterpart Marise Payne in Melbourne.

Jaishankar participated in the panel discussion on the Indo-Pacific at the MSC which is aimed at extensively deliberating on the escalating tension between the NATO countries and Russia over Ukraine.

The panel included Australian Foreign Minister Payne, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, US Chairwoman of the Senate Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation Jeanne Shaheen and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian.

**For 45 years, there was peace, there was stable border management, there were no military casualties on the border from 1975. That changed because we had agreements with China not to bring military forces to the border (the Line of Actual Control or LAC) and the Chinese violated those agreements**

**S JAISHANKAR** | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER



## FERRY FIRE

Smoke rises from the Italian-flagged Euroferry Olympia, which is on fire for third day, in the Ionian sea near the Greek island of Corfu, Sunday. There are 11 people still missing. The Italian-owned ferry, which was carrying more than 290 passengers and crew, as well as 153 trucks and 32 cars, caught fire Friday, three hours after it left the northwestern Greek port of Igoumenitsa, on the mainland, bound for Brindisi, Italy

PTI PHOTO

## Protests in Nepal over US grant

REUTERS

**Kathmandu, Feb 20:** Police in Kathmandu fired teargas and water cannon to disperse protesters opposed to a US-funded infrastructure programme that was presented in parliament for ratification Sunday, witnesses and officials in Nepal's capital said.

Some protesters were injured in the clashes, they said.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a US government aid agency, agreed in 2017 to provide \$500 million in grants to fund a 300-kilometre (187 mile) electricity transmission line and a road improvement project in Nepal. Government officials said the



grant will not have to be repaid and has no conditions attached, but opponents say the agreement would undermine Nepal's laws and sovereignty as lawmakers would have insufficient oversight of the board directing the infrastructure project. Despite loud protests, the Minister for Communication and Information

Technology Gyanendra Bahadur Karki put forward the agreement in parliament and said the projects would benefit 24 million of Nepal's 30 million population.

"The grant will be an important tool for the socio-economic development of the country," Karki said in the parliament.

Major political parties, including members of the ruling coalition, are split over whether to accept or reject the US grant money.

The US Embassy in Nepal described the \$500 million MCC grant as "a gift from the American people and a partnership between our nations that will bring jobs and infrastructure to Nepal and improve the lives of Nepalis."

## Pak govt eyes people's gold to boost forex reserves

The government is considering a proposal to borrow gold biscuits and bars from the people to increase foreign exchange reserves that remain on a sliding path despite taking over \$5bn loans in the past three months from bilateral and multilateral creditors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Feb 20:** Prime Minister Imran Khan-led government is considering a proposal to borrow gold biscuits and bars from the people to increase Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves that remain on a sliding path despite taking over \$5 billion loans in the past three months from bilateral and multilateral creditors, according to a media report Sunday.

The proposal has been discussed in the Economic Executive Council (EEC) — the body comprising all economic ministers and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor, *The Express Tribune* newspaper reported, citing sources in the Ministry of Finance.

According to the proposal, the commercial banks will issue a negotiable discounted instrument to the gold owner and pay an interest rate on the precious metal. The commercial bank will deposit the gold with the SBP that can monetise it to increase the foreign exchange reserves — already largely built by taking expensive foreign



loans. The central bank already has 2.01 million fine troy ounces of gold reserves valued at \$3.8 billion, according to the SBP's reserves position statement of December 31, 2021. The central bank's reserves have constantly been on a declining path and fur-

ther slid to \$17 billion as of February 11, according to the SBP statement. In the past three months, the government took a \$3 billion loan from Saudi Arabia, raised the most expensive debt of \$1 billion in Pakistan's history by pledging motorway and received another \$1 billion from the International Monetary Fund. But still the reserves could not be stabilised due to lower exports and higher imports along with growing foreign loans repayments. The proposal to borrow gold from people against a negotiable instrument had initially been floated by an expatriate, Tahir Mehmood, to Prime Minister Khan. The premier then referred the matter to the EEC that has now fine-tuned it to increase reserves and bring more cash into the market against an idle asset. In the

last EEC meeting, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said that the objective of the gold-based negotiable instruments was to "translate gold into foreign currency to enhance foreign exchange reserves".

According to some estimates shared with the EEC, people have roughly 5,000 tonnes of gold bars and biscuits. But there were no firm numbers available, according to the sources.

The EEC also discussed the issue of low tax contributions by the jewellers, directing the FBR to prepare a plan for the collection of due taxes from the gold industry. There are roughly 36,000 jewellers and only over 50 registered for the sales tax purposes with the FBR. Last month, the government slapped a 17 per cent sales tax on the sale of gold and jewellery.

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# business

## of the day quote

Some people are making advance payments and since spectrum auction is proposed we expect this to go northwards. It will be significantly higher but at this stage we won't be able to give any estimates because we don't have recommendations in hand

**K RAJARAMAN** | TELECOM SECRETARY

The new policy will help cut the cost of manufacturing green hydrogen by 40-50 per cent. This (policy) is the single biggest enabler by the state for production of green hydrogen

**SSV RAMAKUMAR** | DIRECTOR (R&D), INDIAN OIL CORPORATION

Volatility is expected to remain high next week as well, given the crucial meeting between the US and Russia. Inflationary concern, continuous F&I selling and monthly F&O expiry could add to the volatility next week

**SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA** | HEAD - RETAIL RESEARCH, MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD

## SHORT TAKES

### FPIs pull out ₹18,856 crore

**New Delhi:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have withdrawn a net ₹18,856 crore from the Indian markets in February so far amid geopolitical tensions and chances of a rate hike by the US Federal Reserve. As per depositors data, overseas investors took out ₹15,342 crore from equities and ₹3,629 crore from the bonds market between February 1-18. At the same time, they invested ₹115 crore in hybrid instruments. This is the fifth consecutive month of foreign fund outflows.

### STL eyes 20% biz growth

**New Delhi:** Digital networks integrator Sterlite Technologies expects about 20 per cent growth in business across key markets of the US, Europe and India in FY2023 amid global scale-up of networks and 5G build outs, its managing director Ankit Agarwal has said. With a notable drop in Covid-19 cases and easing of curbs, the company is encouraging employees to 'return to office' and has seen positive responses across offices in both India and globally.

### Federal Bank arm files IPO papers

**New Delhi:** Federal Bank subsidiary Fedbank Financial Services Ltd (FedFina) has filed preliminary papers with Sebi for its initial public offering (IPO). The draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) was filed with the capital markets regulator February 19, 2022, Federal Bank said in a regulatory filing Sunday. "Our subsidiary Fedbank Financial Services has filed its draft red herring prospectus with Sebi for the proposed IPO of its equity shares on February 19, 2022," it said.

### Home sales up 13% in 2021

**New Delhi:** Home sales in India's eight prime housing markets increased 13 per cent year-on-year in 2021 as compared to the overall sales in 2020, said PropTiger.com, a leading online real estate brokerage firm. Real estate activity in India's leading markets intensified towards the second half of 2021, after a grim 18 months as the economy was consistently battered by multiple waves of the pandemic, the brokerage said.



**Market participants with less than 12 years of experience have never been burned and have no idea how hot the stove can get**

**SETH KLARMAN** | CEO, BAUPOST GROUP

## 1ST MINI EV LAUNCHING FEB 24

MINI India is gearing up for the launch of its first all-electric Cooper SE in India February 24, 2022. According to MINI, the first batch of 30 units allotted for India have already been booked. The electric hatchback can go from 0-100 kmph in just 7.3 seconds, MINI claims



# World's largest NFT market OpenSea hacked

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** World's largest NFT (non-fungible token) marketplace, OpenSea Sunday confirmed that it has been hit by a phishing attack and at least 32 users had lost their valuable NFTs worth \$1.7 million.

OpenSea Co-Founder and CEO, Devin Finzer acknowledged the phishing attack, confirming that 32 users have lost NFTs so far.

He said rumours that this was a \$200 million hack are false and the attacker has \$1.7 million of ETH

**We don't believe it's connected to the OpenSea website. It appears 32 users so far have signed a malicious payload from an attacker, and some of their NFTs were stolen**

**DEVIN FINZER** | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, OPENSEA

(Ethereum) in his wallet from selling some of the stolen NFTs. While the NFT marketplace was



yet to figure out the magnanimity of the cyber attack, Blockchain investigator Peckshield said he suspects a possible leak of user information (including email ids) that fuelled the phishing attack.

"We are actively investigating rumours of an exploit associated with OpenSea related smart contracts. This appears to be a phishing attack originating outside of OpenSea's website," the NFT marketplace posted in a tweet.

The hack happened as OpenSea announced a new smart contract upgrade with a one-week deadline

to delist inactive NFTs on the platform. The smart contract upgrade required users to migrate their listed NFTs from ETH blockchain to a new smart contract.

Within hours after OpenSea's upgrade announcement, reports across multiple sources emerged about an ongoing attack that targets the soon-to-be-delisted NFTs.

The phishing attack on NFT marketplace occurred as the UK tax authority last week seized three NFTs as part of a probe into a 1.4 million pounds (nearly \$1.9 million) fraud case, the BBC reported Monday.

# Govt plans new tech for coal ops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** The government plans to implement new technologies and build digital infrastructure to support current and future coal mines operations

"The objective is to implement new technologies and build digital infrastructure to support current and future ramp-up for the mines," according to the government's draft technology road map for the coal sector.



## The move is aimed at reducing the country's dependency on imports

This involves a strong, multi-speed backbone information technology and infrastructure system that allows rapid deployment of new technologies.

"Creation of such system would require access to new-age ecosystems (e.g., start-ups, established vendors, research institutes, etc). The technological transformation will also entail the creation of a new culture in the organisation," it said.

To reduce the dependency on imports, it is critical for Coal India Ltd (CIL) to reach the one billion tonne (BT) target, thereby embarking on a technological transformation journey, it said.

New technologies can have a number of impacts on mining operations, including safety and productivity, environmental protection, and opportunities for women.

"The scope of this road map (is)...Technology enablement in coal mines for transformation across business value chain, leveraging 'digital technology' as an accelerator for demonstrating performance enhancement from in the coal mines and increasing productivity, safety and sustainability while...Reducing environmental impact by upgrading conventional technologies to new technologies," according to the draft road map.

## IPL MEDIA RIGHTS

# Amazon, RIL set to lock horns

Amazon.com Inc and Reliance Industries Ltd are expected to take on India units of Sony Group Corp and Walt Disney Co for exclusive five-year TV and digital broadcast rights to the two-month series of matches, at a cost that could run to a record ₹500 billion, sources said



Amazon, Reliance are already locked in a pitched courtroom battle over the acquisition of assets of Future Group

Winning this bid is critical to Reliance's long-term plans for its Jio platform and its digital expansion, said an official

Amazon, whose Prime Video platform recently began live-streaming cricket matches, wants to win the IPL rights to expand the platform's user base, said a source

**The IPL has got to a stage where it's now too big to fail and therefore everyone who is part of the ecosystem is propping it up**

**MEENAKSHI MENON** | ADVERTISING INDUSTRY VETERAN

do not exist." Reliance is also in talks with investors, including foreigners, to raise up to \$1.6 billion for its broadcasting joint venture, Viacom18.

"Everything that has happened at Viacom18 in the last few months, like buying rights to the Spanish La Liga and setting up a sports channel, has been building up to this," said a source with direct knowledge of the company's strategy.

The company lacks a TV platform and would need to bring in a TV partner or could only bid for the digital portion. Industry sources expect flexibility from the BCCI given the prospects for record payments by bidders including a deep-pocketed digital-only player like Amazon.

REUTERS

**Mumbai, Feb 20:** Amazon's rivalry in India with oil-to-retail conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) looks set to head to the cricket field, where they will likely battle media heavyweights for telecast rights to India's premier cricket league with its hundreds of millions of viewers.

Disney-owned Star India, which is one of the top broadcasters in India along with Sony and its planned acquisition Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd, paid ₹163.48 billion for the digital and television rights until 2022. The league's matches reached 350 million viewers during the first half of the 2021 season alone.

But traditional media firms now face stiff competition from deep-pocketed rivals like Reliance, India's biggest retailer, and Amazon, two billionaire-led behemoths com-

peting for the fast-growing e-commerce market while building up their digital platforms.

"Cricket is the second-biggest sport in the world with two-and-a-half billion fans and IPL is like its Super Bowl," said Anton Rublievskiy, head of Parimatch, a betting company that advertised at the Indian Premier League (IPL) last year. "If you're not there, you

## BIZ BUZZ

### Ashok Leyland's \$200mn EV plan

**NEW DELHI:** Bullish on the future of green mobility, the Hinduja Group flagship Ashok Leyland plans to set up a new manufacturing facility in the country to roll out electric vehicles, according to a top company official. The Chennai-based firm has also lined up a ₹500 crore investment to develop powertrains based on alternative fuels like CNG, hydrogen and electric for its commercial vehicles range.



### HGS bags contract from UKHSA

**NEW DELHI:** Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS) Sunday said its UK arm has bagged a contract worth ₹2,100 crore to provide critical customer support to UK citizens for an initial period of two years. HGS UK Ltd bagged the contract from UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), which is responsible for NHS Test & Trace, and the contract will assist with future contact tracing needs for Covid-19 and other health security risks such as a large flu outbreak or new pandemic.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** Five of the 10 most valued firms together added ₹85,712.56 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerging as the biggest gainer.

The market valuation of TCS jumped by ₹36,694.59 crore to reach ₹14,03,716.02 crore, while that of Reliance Industries (RIL) climbed ₹32,014.47 crore to stand at ₹16,39,872.16 crore.

## TCS BIGGEST GAINER

Hindustan Unilever's valuation zoomed ₹12,781.78 crore to ₹5,43,225.5 crore. Besides, HDFC added ₹2,703.68 crore, taking its valuation to ₹4,42,162.93 crore. The valuation of Bajaj Finance stood at ₹4,24,456.6 crore, a rise of ₹1,518.04 crore.

On the other hand, the market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank slipped by ₹3,399.6 crore to ₹8,38,529.6 crore and that of Infosys went down by ₹5,845.84 crore to

₹7,17,944.43 crore. The valuation of ICICI Bank diminished by ₹28,779.7 crore to ₹5,20,654.76 crore and that of State Bank of India (SBI) dipped by ₹12,360.59 crore to ₹4,60,019.1 crore.

Bharti Airtel's valuation stood at ₹3,91,416.78 crore, a decline of ₹961.11 crore. In the ranking of top-10 firms, RIL retained its number one position, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, HUL, ICICI Bank, SBI, HDFC, Bajaj Finance and Bharti Airtel.

## FAT FINGERS, FLASH CRASH, ALGO TRADES

# SKELETONS TUMBLE OUT OF NSE IN CHITRA-YOGI SAGA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Today, the 59-year-old ex-NSE CEO Chitra Ramkrishna stands at the centre of a bizarre scandal after it was revealed that she was guided by a mysterious "Himalayan Yogi" in taking key decisions of the exchange - decisions that impacted the business of an exchange which recorded a daily average turnover of well above ₹2 lakh crore last year and which ranks as the world's largest derivatives exchange and the fourth largest for cash equities in terms of the number of trades

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** Technology is a tiger that everyone is riding, India's top stock exchange NSE's then CEO Chitra Ramkrishna had told PTI eight years ago.

At the time, she herself was riding the tiger at the helm of the National Stock Exchange, which had overtaken over 100-year-old Bombay Stock Exchange as India's biggest bourse within a year of its launch in 1994.

Ironically, it was a major technical glitch in the NSE's sophisticated algorithm-based superfast trading that had propelled her to the top as its first woman CEO in the male-dominated world of stock trading. On the morning of October 5, 2012, NSE was hit by the so-called 'fat finger trade' which resulted in a trade getting executed in a fraction of a second for a whopping amount of ₹650 crore and triggering a massive 'flash crash', wiping off nearly ₹10 lakh crore from investors' wealth in the Indian stock market within seconds.

"Fat-finger trade" is a term used for punching error or wrong pressing of orders on the trading terminals. But there were allegations

that the crash was triggered by something else - perhaps wasn't a technical error but a deliberate manipulation. The exchange was later censured by Sebi after a probe and was asked to beef up its systems and processes.

Such was the momentum that a mandatory trading halt could be put in place only after a sudden 16 per cent crash in the benchmark index Nifty - it missed two check-posts, first at 10 per cent and then at 15 per cent within six seconds.

The madness ended after 15 minutes but still someone had to pay the price. The head that rolled was that of NSE CEO Ravi Narain. A few months later, Narain's baton was formally handed over to his deputy, Chitra Ramkrishna, April 13, 2013.

Soon after her elevation, Ramkrishna appointed Anand Subramanian as her adviser, and later promoted him to Group Operating Officer at a huge salary of ₹4.21 crore. He also happened to be the husband of her friend and an NSE staffer. The NSE board turned a blind eye to the appointment on the grounds that he was a consultant, and that the CEO had the authority to appoint him.

A former regulator said it was astounding that the entire saga has remained buried for almost a decade despite multiple orders passed by the SEBI, which points to the power play at work in this cocktail of corruption, deceit, money laundering, illicit trading and business rivalry

With the years-old case finally attracting public attention, officials said, directions have come from the top now that no one should be spared and all veils must be lifted to expose every single wrongdoing or lapse, from the smallest to the biggest one

The exchange said it is committed to the highest standards of governance and transparency and will extend full co-operation to the regulator for a satisfactory closure of the matter

In its final report, sometime in October 2016, the audit and the bourse dismissed the information exchange, which the regulator had found to be sensitive, as a routine matter by declaring that Subramanian himself was posing as the Yogi to manipulate Ramkrishna and all was well since both of them were quitting the NSE, the official said. Ramkrishna left in December 2016.

It was clearly a white-wash by the exchange in an attempt to keep the scandal under wraps, and to allow Ramkrishna a graceful exit, said an official, adding that SEBI in its final order had refused to accept that Subramanian was posing as the yogi.

Multiple people, including those

who worked with the top leadership of the exchange at that time and at regulatory and government departments, said it looks almost certain that this Yogi is an imaginary identity created by one or multiple people, including some in key positions to control Ramkrishna.

SEBI has levied a fine of ₹3 crore on Ramkrishna, ₹2 crore each on the NSE, Narain and Subramanian and ₹6 lakh on VR Narasimhan, who was the chief regulatory officer and chief compliance officer. In addition,

Sebi has barred the NSE from launching any new product for a period of six months, while Ramkrishna, Subramanian and Narain have been restrained from associating with any market infrastructure institution or any

Sebi-registered intermediary for 2-3 years.



# Venkatesh, Surya light up Eden

India complete a clean sweep against West Indies winning both ODI and T20I series by identical 3-0 margins

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, Feb 20:** Some fearless hitting by Suryakumar Yadav (65, 31b, 1x4, 7x6) and an all-round show by Venkatesh Iyer (35 n o, 19b, 4x4, 2x6 and 2/23) helped India complete a T20I series sweep here Friday at the Eden Gardens. India won the final T20I game of the series by 17 runs. The defeat meant that West Indies were forced to return empty-handed from India. The hosts had earlier won the ODI series by a similar 3-0 margin.

Chasing India's competitive 184 for the loss of five wickets, the visitors ended on 167 for nine to lose the game. Except for Nicholas Pooran (61, 47b, 8x4, 1x6), who got his third successive half century



Venkatesh Iyer celebrates the dismissal of Jason Holder with teammates at the Eden Gardens, Sunday

of the innings, none of the other Windies batters were able to deliver the goods. Rovman Powell (25) and Romario Shepherd (21) looked promising. But their backs were against the wall after they lost skipper Kieron Pollard (5) and Jason Holder (2) in quick succession. Both were dismissed by Venkatesh.

Earlier riding on Surya and Venkatesh's 91-run partnership for the fifth wicket India again got past the 180-run mark. The two scored 86 runs in the last five over of the Indian innings.

Surya once again dazzled with his brilliant and innovative stroke-play while Venkatesh chipped in with an equally dominating contribution. Such was their domi-

## BRIEF SCORES

**India 184 for 5**  
(Suryakumar Yadav 65, Venkatesh Iyer 35 n o, Ishan Kishan 31) beat  
**West Indies 167 for 9**  
(Nicholas Pooran 61, Harshal Patel 3/22, Deepak Chahar 2/15, Venkatesh Iyer 2/23, Shardul Thakur 2/33) by 17 runs

nation that Dominic Drake and Shepherd bowling the 19th and 20th over of the innings went for 20 runs each. Surya hit three sixes in Shepherd's final over to complete what was a miserable night for the pacer.

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard won the toss and opted to bowl first. India made four changes to the side that played in the second T20I with Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shreyas Iyer, Shardul Thakur and pacer Avesh Khan coming into the side. Incidentally, is making his T20I debut for India. The players rested were Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant.

The West Indies, too, made four changes to their line-up, bringing back Hayden Walsh, Fabian Allen, Dominic Drakes and Shai Hope.

India however, started poorly with Gaikwad being caught at third man off the bowling of Holder (1/29). In fact among the opposition bowlers Holder and Roston Chase (1/23) were the most impressive. However, they did not bowl to Surya and Venkatesh.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (7) demoted himself down the order to



SURYAKUMAR YADAV

No.4 to accommodate Gaikwad, but could not get going at his favourite Eden Gardens. Ishan Kishan (34, 31b, 5x4) was much better than the first two games, but even then was not his fluent self.

Shreyas Iyer (15, 16b, 4x4) looked poised for a big score but then fell trying to hit leg-spinner Hayden Walsh (1/30) out of the park. He got a top edge and was safely caught by Holder at the long-off fence.

# Glovesman was informed of his ouster during SA tour Saha spills the beans

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, Feb 20:** Veteran wicket-keeper Wriddhiman Saha, who has been dropped from the Indian Test squad, revealed Saturday that the team management headed by head coach Rahul Dravid had told him to think about 'retirement'. They said he wouldn't be considered for the Test series against Sri Lanka. This development came during India's tour to South Africa.

"The team management told me that I would not be considered henceforth. I could not tell this so long as I was part of the India team setup," an explosive Saha said. "Even coach Rahul Dravid indirectly suggested that I think about retirement," he added.

Saha also hit out at BCCI president Sourav Ganguly. He claimed Ganguly had assured him that he shouldn't worry about his place in the Indian team.

"When I hit an unbeaten 61 taking a pain-killer in the first Test against New Zealand in Kanpur last November, Dadi (as Sourav is referred to by Bengal players) congratulated me

over Whatsapp. He even mentioned that I should not worry about anything so long as he is at the helm of the BCCI. I fail to understand why everything changed so quickly," Saha informed.

The former Indian wicket-keeper said that that message was conveyed to him by Dravid in South Africa. "He called me to his room and informed me that since I am not the first choice keeper anymore, the team management would want to groom some youngsters. He also told me that I should not be shocked if I do not find a place in the side for the Sri Lanka series. I had then told him that I was not thinking about retirement," Saha stated.

Saha also said that chairman of the senior selection committee, Chetan Sharma had also informed him that 'he will not be considered for selection from now on' 10-12 days back.



"Coach called me to his room in South Africa and informed me that the team management wanted to groom some youngsters. I was shocked at this development"

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Dhull impresses

**Guwahati:** Delhi batter and India's 2022 U-19 World Cup-winning captain Yash Dhull slammed his second century of the match in his first-class debut during the Ranji Trophy encounter against Tamil Nadu which ended here Sunday. Dhull scored 113 (120b, 14x4, 1x6) following up on his first innings scored of 113. The youngster once more impressed with his off-side shots and played all the Tamil Nadu bowlers comfortably. Delhi managed to draw the game because of Dhull.

### Tricky draws

**Sofia:** Indian boxers were handed tricky draws at the Strandja Memorial tournament here even as Nikhat Zareen will begin her campaign in the quarterfinals. The tournament started Sunday and will end February 27. Pugnists Sumit and Anjali Tushir are set to face tough opponents in their respective opening round bouts. Zareen, who clinched a gold medal in the 2019 edition, has received a bye in the 52kg opening round. India have fielded a 27-member team in the tournament including 10 women pugilists.

### Easy for JFC

**Vasco:** Jamshedpur FC (JFC) breezed past Chennaiyin FC 4-1 in a lop-sided ISL encounter to move to the second place, here Sunday. The win more or less confirmed JFC's spot in the semifinals. Ritwik Das (23rd), Boris Singh (33rd) and Daniel Chima Chukwu (40th) got on the score-sheet before Deepak Devrani scored an own goal (46th) as Jamshedpur made it three wins to rack up 31 points from 16 matches. For Chennaiyin, Nerijus Valskis (62nd) scored a consolation goal against his former side. JFC now have 31 points from 16 games, one less than table-toppers Hyderabad FC. It was a one way traffic in the first half as JFC players dominated proceedings right from the start, not allowing the opposition to settle.

### Consolation win

**Melbourne:** Kusal Mendis (69 n o, 58b, 5x4, 1x6) and captain Dasun Shanaka (35, 31b, 2x6) shared an 83-run partnership to guide Sri Lanka to a consolation five-wicket win against Australia in the fifth and final Twenty20 match at the MCG here Sunday. The partnership enabled Sri Lanka score 155 for five in reply to Australia's 154 for six in 20 overs. Sri Lanka won with one ball to spare. Mathew Wade (43, 27b, 2x4, 2x6) was the only batter to shine for Australia, though a few got starts. AGENCIES

## Odisha hold on for draw

Opener Shantanu Mishra scores fine century to frustrate Goa

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 20:** A fine century by opener Shantanu Mishra (103, 267b, 11x4) and some handy contributions down the order helped Odisha hold on to a draw in their Ranji Trophy game which ended Sunday at the Sardar Patel Stadium Ahmedabad. Needing 387 for an outright victory, Odisha ended on 235 for the loss of seven wickets when both the captains decided to call off the tie.

The others who also contributed with the bat were first innings hero Rajesh Dhupar (52, 117b, 4x4), Sandeep Patnaik (32, 44b, 5x4) and Anurag Sarangi (28, 44b, 4x4). In fact it was Shantanu and Anurag's opening stand of 52 runs that enabled Odisha lay a strong platform to finally finish the game with honours even.

Odisha suffered a slight wobble when Sandeep, Subhranshu Senapati (2) and Govind Poddar (3) departed in quick succession and at 108 for four they were staring at defeat. However, Dhupar and Shantanu then added 119 runs for the fifth wicket to steady the ship and put the game back on track for Odisha.

Even though Dhupar, Shantanu and Abhishek departed in quick succession, Goa did not have enough overs in their kitty to dismiss the remainder of the batters and the game petered out to a draw. Shantanu was the last

## MEMORABLE TURNAROUND

**Cuttack:** Bengal, who had been bowled out for 88 in their first innings against Baroda at the Barabati Stadium here did the unthinkable and scripted an amazing turn around to win the Ranji game by four wickets Sunday. Chasing a victory target of 349 runs, Bengal rode on brilliant knocks by Shahbaz Ahmed (71 n o) and Abhishek Porel (53 n o) to emerge victorious. The two put on an unbroken partnership of 108 runs for the seventh wicket to guide Bengal to victory. Earlier Abhimanyu Easwaran also played a fine hand of 79 runs.

man to be dismissed, he was run out trying to steal a non-existent single.

However, if Odisha are to do well in the tournament, the middle-order has to come good. The two other teams in the group are Mumbai and Saurashtra.

Amit Yadav (2/14) and Darsan Misal (2/54) were the most successful bowlers for Goa. **Brief scores:** Goa 181 and 394 for five declared; Odisha 189 and 235 for seven (Shantanu Mishra 103, Rajesh Dhupar 52, Amit Yadav 2/14). Match drawn. Odisha 3 points (1st innings lead), Goa 1

## TITLE RACE OPENS UP AFTER CITY'S SHOCKING LOSS TO SPURS

# Man United in goal rush



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN: Harry Kane is over the moon after getting the winning goal for Spurs against Manchester City, Saturday

AGENCIES

**London Feb 20:** Manchester United began with a flourish, stuttered for a brief period but whizzed away in the last 30 minutes to carve out a 4-2 victory in their Premier League encounter Sunday against Leeds United at the Elland Road Stadium.

Harry Maguire and Bruno Fernandez both scored in the first half as Manchester United domi-

nated proceedings. However, Leeds came back strongly in the first 15 minutes of the second and restored parity through Rodrigo Moreno (53rd) and Raphinha (54th). However, Fred (70th) and Anthony Elanga (88th) ensured victory for the Red Devils with two fine strikes.

The win took Manchester United to 46 points from 26 games and kept alive their hopes for a top half as Manchester United domi-

neered a good show by Manchester United keeping in mind that they had conceded two goals in quick succession.

Kane stuns Man City  
Harry Kane's 95th-minute header, seconds after the hosts had levelled through Riyad Mahrez's penalty inflicted City's first league defeat in 16 games.

Spurs manager Antonio Conte avoided losing four on the bounce. "First of all I hate to lose," said Conte. "Our reaction was important. This win will give us more confidence," Conte added.

Both of Spurs' January signings Rodrigo Bentancur and Dejan Kulusevski started and it was the Swede who gave the visitors a dream start. Kane's sumptuous through ball broke City's offside trap and Son unselfishly squared for Kulusevski to slot into an unguarded net on just four minutes.

City had more of the ball, and their pressure finally told on 33 minutes thanks to an error from Spurs captain Hugo Lloris. He spilled Raheem Sterling's cross under pressure from Kevin De Bruyne and Ilkay Gundogan swept home the rebound.

Kane and Son were always a menace on the counter-attack and they combined to brilliant effect to put Spurs back in front just before the hour mark. Kane started the move inside his own half before racing forward to meet the South Korean's cross with a cool finish for just his sixth league goal this season.

## DEBASIS WINS UNDER-18 TITLE



Debasis Sahoo with the trophy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 20:** Odisha lad Debasis Sahoo continued his fine run in the national circuit by claiming the AITA National Series U-18 title Saturday at the Sania Mirza Tennis Academy in Hyderabad. The Odisha lad who is yet to turn 16, defeated fourth seeded Prajwal Tiwari of Maharashtra 6-1, 3-6, 6-2. It was an exciting match with both players giving it their all. Ultimately it was the attacking instincts of Debasis that helped him emerge triumphant.

En route to the title, Debasis had stunned the top seed in quarterfinals and in the semifinals, he beat Mahalingam Kandhavel of Tamil Nadu in straight sets of 7-6, 6-3. Farhan Ali, coach of Debasis said Sunday that his ward has been playing well this year and has already three national level titles in his kitty. "He has delivering some amazing performances and he is beating older players," Ali said.

For his fine performances this year, Debasis has been selected to the Indian team for the Junior Davis Cup, the matches of which will be played April 4-9 at Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

## Must-win tie for both sides

ODISHA AND BFC WILL HAVE TO GET 3 POINTS TO KEEP SEMIFINAL HOPES ALIVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bambolim, Feb 20:** Former champions Bengaluru FC (BFC) and Odisha FC (OFC) will lock horns in a must-win ISL game for both teams here Monday. BFC are sixth in the points table with 23 points from 17 games, four adrift of fourth-placed Kerala Blasters. Odisha are a spot below them at seventh position having 22 points from 17 encounters.

The Blues saw their nine-game unbeaten streak coming to a halt against leaders Hyderabad and then suffered another defeat to lowly NorthEast United FC, derailling their fresh hopes of a semifinal berth to a certain extent.

"We need to focus only on this game. There are three points to win, and we need to improve. We played well for 20 minutes against NorthEast United, then we gave up. It was the same in the second half and that's why we conceded two goals," BFC head coach Marco



Odisha FC players train Sunday ahead of their crucial game Monday against BFC

PEZZAIUOLI said at the pre-match press conference Sunday.

"Odisha are a very good squad on the counter-press. If you give them space like we saw in the first game that we lost, they can score

goals," Pezzaiuoli added.

Odisha have to win their remaining games in order to keep their semifinal hopes alive and coach Kino Garcia said the team will fight till the last minute of this campaign.

"We know this is going to be difficult. We still have a chance and everybody want to compete until the end. Against BFC, we know that both teams need a victory to arrive to stay alive in the tournament. So we are motivated and the mood in the camp is okay. We need to learn from our mistakes and keep going," Garcia said.

The last time the two teams met in their first game of the season, Odisha ran out 3-1 winners. However, Garcia refused to read too much into that.

"That is too long ago. We can't think about that now, that was the start of the season. BFC are a good team and had a run of unbeaten games before losing to NorthEast United. So we know it will be a difficult game for us," added Garcia.

## FORMER INDIA FOOTBALL COACH AKRAMOV DEAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** Former Indian football team coach Rustam Akramov, who introduced the legendary Bhaichung Bhutia to the international game in 1995 and took the Blue Tigers to their highest-ever FIFA ranking, has died at his native place in Uzbekistan. He was 73. He passed away February 15, according to the official website of the National Olympic Committee of Uzbekistan.

"The National Olympic Committee of Uzbekistan and the Council of Sports Veterans of Uzbekistan express their condolences to the family and friends of Rustam Akramov in connection with his death," the Olympic body said.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) also condoled the death of Akramov who was in charge of the national team from 1995 to 1997.

"We mourn the passing away of former India national team head coach Rustam Akramov. May his



soul rest in peace," the AIFF's official Twitter handle said.

Akramov did not have any major trophy to show for during his short tenure with the Indian team. However, it was he who unveiled the talented Bhutia. It was he who transformed Bhutia from an attacking midfielder to a striker.

No wonder the Akramov-coached Indian team rose to 94th in the February 1996 FIFA rankings — their highest ever.