



PC EUPHORIC

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas has turned 'cheerleader' for husband Nick Jonas and his new album, *Spaceman*

LEISURE P2



FLOYD'S FAMILY TO GET \$27MN

Minneapolis will pay \$27mn to settle a civil lawsuit from George Floyd's family over the Black man's death

INTERNATIONAL P10



2ND T20I TODAY

Team India look to bounce back from their loss in the first T20I when they face England in the 2nd match

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes! It's my leg that got hurt. But bandage on head will be more visible to voters!

SHORT TAKES

No final exams for Class I-VIII students

Bhubaneswar: The School and Mass Education (S&ME) department Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said Saturday that all students from Class I to Class VIII will be promoted without appearing any exam. Schools across the state will not reopen in the current academic year, he said, adding, a decision in this regard was taken in view of the recent surge in COVID-19 infections in the state. However, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is to take a final call in this regard, the Minister expressed. "In view of the current situation due to COVID-19, I have directed to promote all students studying in classes I to VIII to the next higher class."

Prez Kovind to visit Odisha next week

Bhubaneswar: President Ram Nath Kovind is scheduled to undertake a two-day visit to Odisha next week during which he will attend the convocation ceremony at NIT Rourkela as the chief guest, official sources said. Kovind will visit the premier institute March 21, and visit Konark temple the next day, the sources said. The programme at NIT Rourkela is set to begin at 10 am, and the president would be delivering the convocation address on the occasion.

| WEATHER | | BHUB | CTK |
|---------|----------|-----------------------------|--------|
| TEMP | MAX | 35.2°C | 34.0°C |
| | MIN | 23.6°C | 21.8°C |
| | Humidity | 86% | 84% |
| | Rainfall | Nil | Nil |
| | | Forecast: Partly cloudy sky | |

THE RULING BJD AND OPPOSITION BJP AND CONG MLAs DISRUPTED THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

Bedlam breaks loose in House

Opposition BJP and Congress demanded lifting of paddy from farmers

BJD sought apology from BJP legislator for his suicide attempt inside the House

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: In an unprecedented scene, both the ruling BJD and the Opposition BJP and Congress MLAs created ruckus in the House, obstructing the proceedings throughout the day, Saturday. The BJD members were responsible for the chaos in the House even during introduction of eight Bills.

As soon as the House assembled for the day at 10.30 am, BJP members rushed to the well and raised slogans demanding procurement of paddy lying with the farmers across the state. Congress members too joined them, disrupting the entire Question Hour.

Even as the bedlam continued, government chief whip Pramilla Mallick demanded an apology from BJP legislator Subash Panigrahi, who attempted suicide Friday by consuming hand sanitiser inside the House. This prompted the Treasury bench members to rush into the well of the House and create chaos. Unable to continue with the proceedings of the House, Speaker SN Patro adjourned the House first till 11.30 am and again till post lunch session (4 pm). The situation remained same during the second half. After in-



FILE PHOTO

roduction of eight Bills, the Speaker adjourned the House till Monday.

Speaking to reporters outside the House, Opposition chief whip Mohan Majhi said there was no question of Panigrahi begging apology. He said Panigrahi was forced to take the extreme step as the government did not initiate any step to procure paddy from the farmers, who themselves are threatening self-immolation.

The BJP leader said Panigrahi would not tender any apology, adding, "Let the Speaker suspend him or take any disciplinary action against him."

Supporting the BJP, Congress legislator Taraprasad Bahinipati said, "We will

EIGHT BILLS INTRODUCED

BHUBANESWAR: Amid uproar, eight Bills, including Odisha Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Bill, were introduced in the state Assembly. The other Bills are — Xavier University Odisha (Amendment) Bill, Odia University (Amendment) Bill, Odisha Appropriation Acts (Repeal) Bill, Odisha Repealing Bill, Odisha Advocates' Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill, Societies Registration (Odisha Amendment) Bill and Biju Patnaik University of Technology (Amendment) Bill. P3

not demand an apology from Panigrahi. He attempted to commit suicide because the government is not addressing the grievances of the farmers."

"This is the first instance of BJD ministers creating ruckus in the well of the House. We will also not allow the Assembly to function till they apologise for this. Ministers agitating in the well is against the tradition and practice of this August House," Bahinipati said.

Senior Congress legislator Narasingha Mishra too slammed the BJD for stalling the proceedings. The ruling party members have proved that they are anti-farmer because, instead of resolving the farmers' issue, they have stalled the House, he said.

"The Speaker has the power to take legal actions if anything goes wrong in the House. Instead of doing that, why they (BJD) have stalled the House?" Mishra asked. BJD lawmaker and former minister PK Deb, however, said that the ruling party condemns Panigrahi's act as it has brought a bad name to the Assembly and the state. "The elected members come to the House to raise people's issues and not to set a bad trend," Deb stated.

Woman's skeleton found in seized vehicle at Janla

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The in-charge of Janla outpost under Khandagiri police station was suspended Saturday following the recovery of a human skeleton from a vehicle seized in February and kept at the outpost premises.

Interacting with the media, DCP Umashankar Dash said that Sub-Inspector Satyabrata Grahacharya, who was in charge of Janla outpost, has been suspended for the dereliction of duty.

Grahacharya had no inkling of how or since when the body remained locked inside the car. According to police sources, it was Grahacharya's duty to regularly check the status of all seized vehicles on the premises.

Sources claimed that Rambha police in Ganjam detected cannabis in a vehicle at a place under Janla police limits in November 2019. The cops followed the vehicle all the way from Ganjam to Bhubaneswar and seized the contraband here. Later, the vehicle was taken to the Janla outpost when it developed some technical glitches.

In January, the owner of the vehicle obtained the release order for his vehicle from a court and had come to Janla police



The vehicle in which the woman's 'mummified' body was found

station along with cops from Ganjam police station and relevant documents to take charge of the vehicle. To everyone's shock, they found a woman's mummified body was lying inside. The body was sent to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, for post-mortem and the report revealed that the deceased was a 45-year-old woman who had natural death.

While the deceased is yet to be identified, it is being claimed that she was possibly a mentally ill person or a very poor destitute. Even the medical officers of AIIMS also found that the deceased was suffering from tuberculosis and malnourishment.

The DCP said police have initiated a probe as to how the deceased got into the vehicle.

ONLINE NEWS

Pichai, Nadella in war of words

Google and Microsoft are at odds over whether publishers should have more control over a digital ad industry dominated by the search giant and Facebook

AGENCIES

San Francisco, March 13: Sundar Pichai-run Google has launched a scathing attack on Microsoft, accusing the Satya Nadella-run enterprise of willing to break the way the open Web works in an effort to undercut a rival.

The attack came as Microsoft president Brad Smith, who Friday issued a testimony for the House Committee on the judiciary looking into antitrust and commercial aspects of competition for a free and diverse press, and slammed Google for hampering the growth of news organisations.

"News organisations have ad inventory to sell, but they can no longer sell directly to



those who want to place ads," Smith said in a statement.

"Instead, for all practical purposes they must use Google's tools, operate on Google's ad exchanges, contribute data to Google's operations, and pay Google money. All this impacts the ability of news organisations to benefit economically even from advertising on their own sites," Smith noted. Kent Walker,

Google's head of global affairs, hit back late Friday, saying this latest attack marks a return to Microsoft's long-time practices.

"It's no coincidence that Microsoft's newfound interest in attacking us comes on the heels of the SolarWinds attack and at a moment when they've allowed tens of thousands of their customers to be actively hacked via major

Microsoft vulnerabilities," Walker said in a statement.

"They are now making self-serving claims and are even willing to break the way the open web works in an effort to undercut a rival. And their claims about our business and how we work with news publishers are just plain wrong," he added.

Google and Microsoft are at odds over whether publishers should have more control over a digital ad industry dominated by the search giant and Facebook.

In January, Google threatened to remove its search engine from Australia in response to the News Media Bargaining Code that would force the company to pay news publishers for their content.

BUSINESS EMINENCE AWARDS

Inaugurator

Shri Naveen Patnaik
Hon'ble CM, Odisha

Chief Guest

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan
Hon'ble Union Minister
Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel

Keynote Address

Vishal Dev, IAS
Principal Secretary Tourism,
Sports & Youth Services

20 March, 2021

Venue: Swosti Premium, Bhubaneswar

Associate Sponsor

Co-sponsors

Associates

Outdoor Partner

Banking Partner

Channel Partner

Radio Partner



LOPEZ, A-ROD'S RELATIONSHIP 'ON THE ROCKS FOR MONTHS'

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez and baseball star Alex Rodriguez, who called off their relationship Friday, were not been on ideal terms for months and the problems between the two had started during lockdown last year, reports have now emerged.

WHY JENNETTE MCCURDY WALKED AWAY FROM ACTING

Actress Jettette McCurdy, who quit stardom a while ago, says that she was not happy with life as an actress and was not fond of the roles she did. "I was a famous but deeply unhappy. I didn't like the projects that came my way, so, quit" she said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You're finally impressed by the yogis. A degree course in Art of Living? Ganesh approves. You may even fulfill a desire to begin lessons in music or dance, or something that has interested you since long.

TAURUS
Today, you may experience the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain. Household tasks may weigh you down around afternoon. Later in the day, you will be able to achieve whatever you desire solely on account of your determination and mental strength.

GEMINI
Your long-term goals seem to be shaping up well. You may also expect some good news, which will change the course of your life. Play a waiting game in matters of auctions and sealed tenders.

CANCER
Not a good day for you in terms of fortune and opportunities. You will constantly find yourself in unwanted tricky situations without any fault of yours. You, however, are likely to know what to do in such situations by now, for you have been in too many of those in the past.

LEO
The friends we make go a long way in making us who we are, says Ganesh. Over the years, with your natural instinct to be a social charmer, you have built a fine circle of dedicated friends on whom you can bank with confidence under any circumstance.

VIRGO
An easy-going day full of fun and light moments will help you vent all that pressure built up inside you. Ganesh predicts a progressive and profitable day for you. Expect to honour invitations to social events or even parties.

LIBRA
It is more than likely, and possible indeed, that you will surpass your own past performances today. All this is on the cards, despite the fact that your peers at work will try to outwit you.

SCORPIO
Ganesh predicts today will be a day full of focus and a clear thought process. The clarity of thought you have been acquired over a period of time, says Ganesh, and that could make all the difference. A crisp application of thoughts to ideas and actions will bring much appreciation from bosses and peers.

SAGITTARIUS
Darkness and death in the atmosphere. Try to be humble and caring to people. Elders need special care. Confess your sins to your dearest one. Only humility will help you to overcome the dark phase. Be thankful for all you have and your dedication and devotion to work will also peak today, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
It's going to be a day of pleasant surprises. You will try your level best to help people around you, and will find it exceedingly frustrating when the results won't be as expected, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Eat, drink, and make merry. But watch out: don't empty your pockets in one go. Also, guard your reputation. A lot depends on your behaviour, and the big daddies may be watching you. You have a lot at stake, and there should be no regrets later.

PISCES
Now is the time when the inner circle of friends that you have nurtured over the years will prove their worth, says Ganesh. It is good to know that in times of need you can bank on their support and count on their cooperation.

Priyanka turns cheer leader

Mumbai: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has turned cheer-leader for husband Nick Jonas and his new album, *Spaceman*. She also shared she is grateful for how the American pop singer constantly shows his love for her.

Priyanka posted a string of pictures on Instagram. One image has Nick shaking hands with an astronaut figurine while another features a photograph of the actress posing with a spaceman mannequin.

"Congratulations Nick.. I know how personal this one is to you and I'm so grateful for how you constantly show me your love. This album is a piece of art. And most of all...A BANGER! I love you. Check it out world. #Spaceman." Priyanka wrote as the caption.

Spaceman is Jonas' fourth studio album and first solo release as a singer since 2016.

The star couple will be announcing the Oscar nominations March 15. IANS



Ranveer, Deepika play 'peek-a-boo' with camera

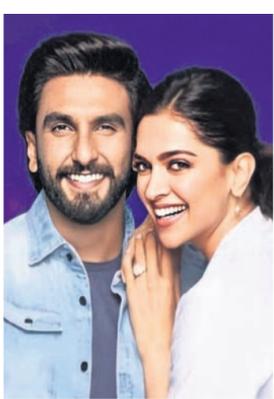
Mumbai: Actor Ranveer Singh has shared a loved-up picture with his wife and actress Deepika Padukone on Instagram.

In the picture, the couple, also known as DeepVeer by their fans, is seen posing for the camera. Ranveer looks straight into the lens while only half of Deepika's face is visible.

"peek-a-boo. @deepikapadukone." Ranveer captioned the image. Ranveer did not share de-

tails behind the picture or where it was taken, as the two are seen sporting winter wear and caps.

The star couple will soon be seen on the big screen in Kabir Khan's upcoming film *83*, revolving around India's victory in the 1983 World Cup under the captaincy of star cricketer Kapil Dev. Ranveer is essaying Kapil's character while his real life wife Deepika plays Romi Dev, the wife of the former Indian skipper. IANS



Netflix bags rights for Dev Patel's directorial debut *Monkey Man*

Los Angeles: Streamer Netflix has bought the worldwide rights for actor Dev Patel's directorial debut movie *Monkey Man*.

Patel, known for movies such as *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Lion* and *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, also stars in the movie, which recently completed filming and will be released by the streamer in 2022, reported *Variety*.

The agreement, which is reported to be worth around USD 30 million, excludes territories like Spain, Latin America, Iceland, Former Yugoslavia, Poland, Russia and Baltic States, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Pan-Asian PTV and China, where there are pre-existing deals.



The India-set revenge drama will also feature *Made in Heaven* actor Sobhita Dhulipala and Patel's *Chappie* co-star Sharlto Copley.

Patel, 30, plays an unlikely hero who emerges from prison to take on a world enmeshed in corporate greed and eroding spiritual values, seeking revenge from those who took everything from him many years ago.

The actor has also penned the film's script in collaboration with Paul Angunawela and John Collee. IANS

Kangana in trouble over *Manikarnika* sequel

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut seems to have invited trouble after attempting to make a sequel titled *Manikarnika Returns: The Legend Of Didda* to her earlier film *Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi*.

A city court Friday directed the police to lodge an FIR against her in a copy right violation case filed by Ashish Kaul, author of the book *Didda: The Warrior Queen Of Kashmir*.

Kaul Saturday said that the narrative of the queen being a nationalist who nurtured an undivided India has been written solely by

him. But Kangana took material from his book without proper permission. Didda was the princess of Lohar (Poonch), and the queen of Kashmir. Kaul has claimed to be a descendant of the queen.

He filed his FIR at Khar station for the violation of Copyright Act against Kangana, her sister Rangoli Chandell, Kamal Kumar Jain and Manikarnika Films Private Limited.

He revealed that he had sent a mail to Kangana informing her of the copyright violation but was met with a holding response that they would reply to his mail. Kangana's advocate Rizwan Siddique said: "I shall obtain a copy of the entire proceedings from the court and then give a detailed statement." IANS

ASIM UTSAV 2021 Curtains come down on theatre fest with Odia play *Cycle*

Bhubaneswar: The city theatre lovers witnessed the ideological conflicts between a father and his son in Odia play *Cycle*, staged here at Rabindra Mandap, Saturday during Asim Utsav.

The two-day event comprising two Odia plays and an art exhibition was organised by Asim Basu Foundation (ABF) in collaboration with Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department, Government of Odisha.

A son is sick of riding a bicycle and wants to replace it with a motor bike. For this, he is ready to give away his ancestral land for industrialisation and get compensation that he thinks would help



A scene from play *Cycle* staged at Rabindra Mandap, Saturday

him buy a motor cycle. But the father, who is emotionally attached with the cycle, thinks otherwise. For him cycle is the symbol of stability.

He is also reluctant to part with his land. The emotional clash between father-son duo over a bicycle formed the storyline of the play.

The play was adapted by Chittaranjan Chiranjit from a novel of the same name authored by him while Debadutta Pati directed the play.

The dignitaries who attended the event as guests include Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) Secretary Prabodh Kumar Rath, Idco's Chief General Manager Ganeshwar Jena and Odisha Natya Sangh Secretary Lala Biren Roy.

OSNA Secretary Rath said, "I offer my best wishes to the event organisers and hope the young artistes would draw inspiration from the life and works of eminent actor, director and painter Asim Basu, whose statue was installed last year fulfilling the long-time demand of many theatre practitioners."

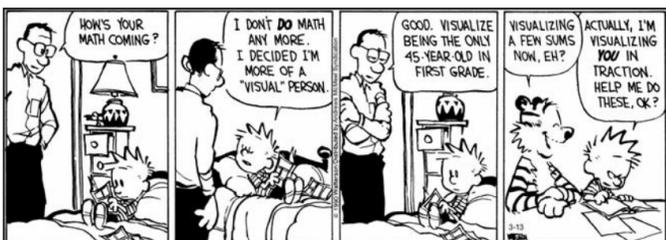
Play's director Pati said, "Asim Da (Asim Basu) always wanted the new generation to come forward to enrich Odisha's culture. It is a matter of honour for me that I am directing the first dramatisation of an Odia play written by a young writer on this platform."

A short meeting, ahead of the play, was conducted by ABF's secretary Pabitra Mohan Kar.

PEANUTS



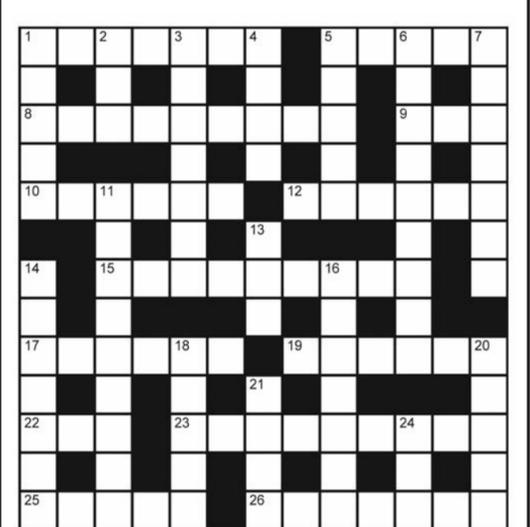
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Canoe movers
 - 5 Ticked off
 - 8 Sorcerer's tool (5,4)
 - 9 Bag thickness
 - 10 Forbidding
 - 12 Limb
 - 15 Disinfect
 - 17 Laboured
 - 19 Musical exercises
 - 22 Serengeti grazer
 - 23 Like snakes and lizards
 - 25 Decorative pitchers
 - 26 Frankenstein creator
 - Down**
 - 1 Apples, e.g.
 - 2 Excavate
 - 3 Swiss city
 - 4 Fly like an eagle
 - 5 Early warning system
 - 6 Zest, e.g. (5,4)
 - 7 Porpoise relative
 - 11 Foyer
 - 13 Auction action
 - 14 Exhaustion
 - 16 Grade
 - 18 Merits
 - 20 Like a beach
 - 21 Mimics
 - 24 Indisposed

SUDOKU

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

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | D | | | | | | 9 | 1 | |
| | 9 | | | | | 7 | B | 2 | | |
| | | E | | 0 | | | | 6 | 5 | A |
| 2 | | | 9 | 8 | | | D | C | | |
| | | 5 | | | 1 | 6 | A | | 0 | |
| D | A | 2 | 6 | | 7 | 5 | B | 9 | | |
| | 9 | C | 7 | 3 | A | | | | 8 | |
| 1 | | 0 | 4 | | D | C | | | | |
| | 0 | 2 | 9 | | 5 | | 4 | 3 | | |
| | | | D | | | 4 | B | 7 | | 6 |
| | | 5 | 1 | C | | | | 0 | D | 2 |
| | | | | A | | | 0 | | | 5 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | 1 | | 7 | | | | | B | 4 | |
| | | | | C | B | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | |
| | | 3 | B | | | E | D | A | 2 | C |

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | O | L | A | S | H | A | S | P | I | C |
| U | F | B | O | C | A | H | | | | |
| A | P | O | L | O | G | I | S | E | L | E |
| V | L | S | R | I | C | | | | | |
| A | L | I | B | I | T | A | B | A | S | C |
| S | E | E | T | H | E | S | H | O | D | D |
| C | N | T | I | G | M | O | E | | | |
| A | N | T | I | G | U | A | L | I | S | L |
| R | I | A | N | I | A | X | | | | |
| L | A | C | M | A | C | A | D | A | M | I |
| E | A | E | H | A | A | M | | | | |
| T | I | L | T | S | H | U | L | S | S | E |

SUDOKU

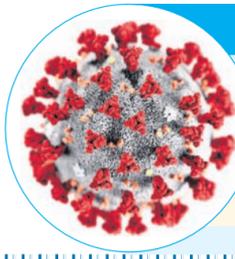
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | 1 | 8 | 2 | 4 | D | 9 | 0 | C | 3 | A | 6 | 7 | 5 | E |
| E | 2 | A | B | 5 | D | 3 | 7 | 0 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 6 | C | |
| 5 | D | 3 | 8 | 1 | 9 | B | E | 6 | C | 4 | 7 | 2 | 0 | A |
| 7 | 9 | C | 0 | 6 | E | 4 | A | 5 | B | 1 | 2 | D | 3 | 8 |
| 6 | 0 | A | C | 3 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 2 | E | 5 | D | B | 4 | 9 |
| 8 | 5 | D | 6 | 9 | A | 0 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 2 | B | E | C | 3 |
| E | 9 | 7 | D | 2 | 3 | 5 | A | 1 | 6 | C | 8 | B | 0 | |
| C | B | 6 | E | 0 | 1 | 2 | 9 | D | 5 | 8 | 3 | A | 7 | 4 |
| 3 | 7 | 1 | B | 5 | 8 | C | 4 | E | A | 0 | D | 9 | 2 | 6 |
| 2 | A | 0 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 7 | E | 5 | 1 | D | 0 | |
| 1 | C | 8 | 0 | 7 | C | A | 6 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 4 | B | 1 | |
| 4 | 1 | C | E | 4 | 2 | 6 | 7 | D | 3 | 8 | B | 9 | 0 | A |
| D | 4 | 7 | 5 | A | 0 | E | 2 | 8 | 6 | C | 1 | 3 | 9 | B |
| A | 8 | 5 | 9 | E | B | 1 | C | 0 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 6 | D | 2 |
| 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 5 | B | 4 | D | 0 | A | C | E | 7 |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



ORTHOPAEDIC ASSN MEET

Indian Orthopaedic Association president B Shivashankar inaugurates the 45th annual conference of Odisha Orthopaedic Association at the auditorium of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| World | 11,97,53,783 | 9,63,60,489 | 26,53,985 |
| India | 1,10,63,140 | 1,09,73,260 | 1,58,446 |
| Odisha | 3,38,121 | 3,35,569 | 1,918 |

OUR MOTTO IS TO CREATE GOOD HUMAN BEINGS: SANJIB ROUT

Odisha witnessed the impact of Covid-19 towards the end of 2019-20 academic year. Till date, the education system as well as the classroom teaching has not been normal. Since **CV Raman Global University** is equipped with all modern technologies and facilities, the pandemic did not affect its education much. However, the situation has affected the quality of education as well as the students' mentality. The institution tried its best to deal with the crisis through online education, said **CV Raman Global University founder president Sanjib Rout** in an interview with **Orissa POST**. Excerpts:



■ What are your plans for 2021-22 academic year?

■ This year, we will go for more advanced technologies in education. We have planned to introduce world-class teaching at CV Raman Global University. The students of at least 17 countries have their association with our institute. Eminent faculty members from several countries have agreed to teach our students. Education is not about getting jobs, it is the other name of improving society. Our motto is to create good human beings. We have the confidence and best wishes of the parents and guardians.



The institution began its journey as CV Raman Institute of Technology from a rented building at Mancheswar in 1992. During its 29 years of successful journey, the institute has become one of the leading technical education centres in the Capital

■ How did the pandemic affect the employees of your institution?

■ The pandemic created a sense of panic among our employees across all categories. We had assured them that no one would lose his/her job. They were encouraged to do their best for the institution. However, the pandemic created a distance among us for a few

months. The situation is improving now.

■ What are the provisions for education in the current Budget?

■ The Budget 2021-22 is expected to strengthen the education system in the country. The government has tabled a multi-purpose Budget to improve the education system as well as the entire economy.

■ Your views on technical institutes in Bhubaneswar

■ We have to change our mentality for the development of educational institutes. We should focus on our improvement instead of targeting others. An institute can achieve success by utilising the capacity of its students for the welfare of the society.

■ To whom would you attribute the success of CV Raman Group?

■ We have the blessings of the almighty and the cooperation of our well-wishers. The dedication and love of our employees as well as the cooperation of the guardians have played a major role in this regard. Our competitors have also some contributions to our development. Hard work, strong determination and good public relations are the secrets of our success.

GST CUT WILL BOOST AUTO SALES: GUGNANI

The Covid-19 pandemic damaged every sector and the auto industry is no different. After a long year of the pandemic, the situation seems to be getting normal now; the demand in auto sector is increasing. In this regard, **Rajan Gugnani, Managing Partner of Gugnani Honda and Gugnani Auto Cars** provides a rare glimpse into the current state of the automotive industry. Excerpts:



■ The impact of the pandemic

■ First nine months of the pandemic were very bad for the auto industry. We had to bear all the losses but we never stopped to pay salaries to our employees. I believe the worst period is over and the sales are growing now. We are looking ahead for better opportunity and business in future.

■ Present situation of auto sector

■ The impact of the pandemic was severe to the automobile sector. However, at present, the business of automobile sector is stable now. The developments of auto sector and road infrastructure are the key to country's growth. Despite a barrier like the pandemic, the auto sector is always in a better path. The scrappage policy will boost the sales.

■ Your initiative to satisfy your customers

■ Providing satisfaction to our customers through our services is Gugnani Honda's sole motto. Gugnani Honda is always set with customer oriented and customer friendly approaches. They are always happy with our service and even they recommend to each other. We believe in personalized meeting with customers for which we penetrate into the market. We are available in every area to provide every-

thing to the customers. Our service quality is very good and we have also expert technicians.

■ How's the City market for Gugnani Honda?

■ Bhubaneswar market is a very good market and it is growing rapidly. We have witnessed a huge change in the City. The state government is very supportive as well.

■ Your opinion on GST on auto sector

■ The Goods and Service Tax always plays a vital role in the growth of the auto sector. If there is a GST cut it will show a positive impact on the sector. About 50% of GST is im-

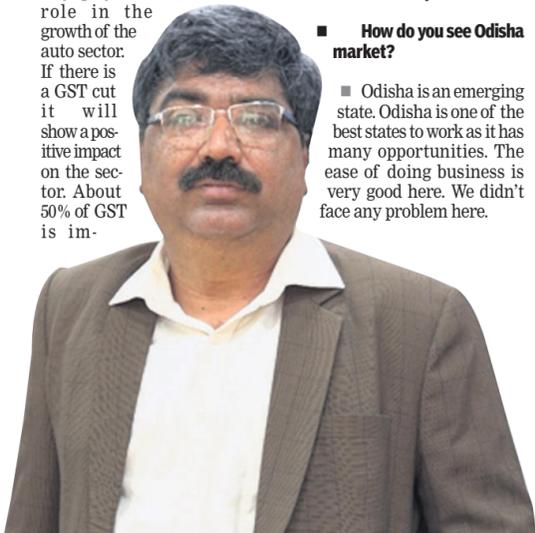
posed in the SUVs. We can see there are 10 lakh bike sales in a month in India but in USA it is 10 lakh sales of cars. In India, we sell only 2.3 lakh cars. There is a such difference because of GST. If GST is reduced, car sales will increase.

■ The preparation for electric vehicle

■ Electric vehicle is the future of the automobile industry. But due to shortage of several elements, fully operational electric vehicles will take time. I hope electric vehicles will go on road in next ten years.

■ How do you see Odisha market?

■ Odisha is an emerging state. Odisha is one of the best states to work as it has many opportunities. The ease of doing business is very good here. We didn't face any problem here.



Birthday Blessings



PRANEEL DASH
Mississauga, Canada
On this auspicious day, we pray Mahaprabhu Jagannath to shower all happiness on your future life.
With blessings from:
Japa, Jema, Aai, Daddy, Mummy, Brother: Pranshu and all relatives.

14-year-old meets watery grave in City



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: A 14-year-old boy drowned while taking a bath in Kuakhai river near Bankuala under Sahid Nagar police limits here Saturday.

The victim, Maheswar Prusty, was the only son of Sridhar Prusty. Hailing from Baliana area, Prusty, a driver by profession, has been residing at a rented accommodation in Laxmisagar area here, sources said.

The incident occurred in the morning when Maheswar along with three of his friends had gone to have a bath in the river. According to one of the boys, they were cautioned by some elderly against venturing deep into the water. However, they did not take it seriously. Maheswar was drifted towards deep water. His friends, however, managed to swim ashore. Upon receipt of information, Fire Services personnel reached the spot and rescued the minor. He was later rushed to the Capital Hospital where the doctors declared him 'brought dead'.

Speaking to Orissa POST, DCP Umashankar Dash said they have provided financial assistance to the deceased's family from the Red Cross fund.

Similipal forest fires fully contained, says forest dept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The forest department Saturday said the forest fires at Similipal have been completely contained and the situation is under control now.

Principal Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Sandeep Tripathi Saturday said, "The proactive steps taken by the state government to check and control forest fires in Odisha have produced the desired result. The Similipal forest fires have been completely contained."

The official also said the latest report from the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad claimed that forest fire situation in Similipal region is improving.

"The FSI Dehradun has indicated 341 forest fire alerts in the state Saturday with only four fire alerts in Similipal as against 701 fire alerts of Friday," said a statement from the PCCF office.

The department claimed that all the officials concerned, including the Collector and the police personnel are working in tandem to resolve the issue. The officials are on 24x7 alert to deal with the situation.

"Patrolling has been beefed up and the situation is being monitored round-the-clock through the Odisha Forest Management System (OFMS)," the department said.

The department is also sharing the fire alert points received from FSI, Dehradun to the ground level personnel and other concerned departments through Whatsapp and SMS alert to keep them updated.

"Forest Staffs have promptly attended to these points and about 95 per cent of all these fire points have been dealt with. As per the FSI Alerts, there is no continuous fire at any places in state," said the department.

8 Bills tabled amid pandemonium



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Amid uproar, eight Bills, including Odisha Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Bill were introduced in the state Assembly Saturday.

Amendment to the Odisha Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2005 will allow the state government to raise the level of fiscal deficit by another 2 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

As per the proposed amendment, additional 2 per cent fiscal deficit includes unconditional borrowing of 0.5 per cent of GSDP and another 0.5 per cent bonus for completion of at least three of state-specific reforms.

The balance 1 per cent depends on the implementation of four sectoral reforms, each carrying weightage of 0.25 per cent. The decision would give an additional leeway to the state government to go for higher borrowing for meeting its rising capital need, sources said.

Through the Odisha Repealing Bill, the government has proposed to repeal 206 old and obsolete Acts that were passed between 1976 and 2016.

The other Bills are—Xavier University Odisha (Amendment) Bill, Odia University (Amendment) Bill, Odisha Appropriation Acts (Repeal) Bill, Odisha Advocates' Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill, Societies Registration (Odisha Amendment) Bill and Biju Patnaik University of Technology (Amendment) Bill.

46,731 unemployed techies in state

BHUBANESWAR: General students apart, there are over 46,000 engineering students who remained unemployed in the state after completing professional engineering courses.

According to a written reply from Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Premananda Nayak, 46,731 engineering students have registered themselves in employment exchanges of the state. Out of which, 9,487 students have completed B Tech course, 3,497 are M Tech pass-outs and 33,747 are diploma pass-outs, he said.

For employment of students, the government has opened placement cells in its technical university, colleges and polytechnic schools. The technical students also get jobs from their own attempt, he said.

Besides, the government is providing soft skill training, software training and employability skill training to pass-out students to make them employable. The state has signed an MoU with various companies to set up a centre of excellence at different colleges, the minister further said.

Nayak said the government doesn't have any plan to provide monthly allowance to the unemployed engineering students or waive off their loans.

State has 2,924 transgenders, 8,338 beggars

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: There are altogether 2,924 registered transgenders and 8,338 beggars in the state, said Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Minister Ashok Chandra Panda in the Assembly, Saturday.

In a written reply to an un-starred question by BJD MLA Ramesh Chandra Sai, Panda said that Mayurbhanj district had the highest number of 485

transgenders, followed by Balasore—302, Khurda—283, Rayagada—209, Angul—195, Cuttack—183, Bolangir—153, Dhenkanal—136 and Koraput—127. Similarly, there are 31 transgenders in Bargarh district, 32 in Bhadrak, 12 in Boudh, 26 in Deogarh, 34 in Gajapati, 90 in Ganjam, 17 in Jagatsinghpur, 40 each in Jajpur & Jharsuguda, 96 in Kalahandi, 65 in Kandhamal, 49 in Keonjhar, 42 in Malkangiri, 23 in Nabarangpur, 36 in Nayagarh, six in Nuapada, 41 in Puri, 65 in Sambalpur

and 30 in Sonepur district. Kendrapara has only four registered transgenders, the lowest among the 30 districts. The minister further said housing and urban development and panchayati raj & drinking water departments have been requested to provide houses to transgenders. Replying to another question, Panda said 8,338 beggars have been identified in Odisha and his department doesn't have any information about the baggers from outside the state.

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NOW, ROBOT TO HELP CLEAN MANHOLES IN HOLY CITY



AGENCIES

Puri, March 13: In what could be the first-of-its-kind development in the country, robots would now supplement the manual cleaning of manholes in the Puri municipality area.

The robot named 'Bandicoot' has been engaged for cleaning manholes, which is considered to be the most dangerous work in the scavenging field.

Puri Collector Samarth Verma Saturday flagged off the commissioning of the robot operations in the Puri municipality and the cleaning of the first manhole began in front of Sonali plaza here. An official release Saturday said that this is the country's first robot to supplant manual cleaning of manholes.

Every year, a large number of people lose their lives while clean-

ing manholes.

This robot has been developed by an Indian company 'Genrobotics' under the 'Make in India' initiative.

This would keep away persons normally engaged for manual cleaning of manholes risking their lives. Robots too dispose of sewage waste through an automatically-operated system. The sanitation workers would be trained by professionals how to operate the robot.

The robot operator and the sanitation workers would be equipped with sanitised PPE kits. This apart, their health check up would be conducted at regular intervals.

Induction of robots for cleaning manholes not only would make lives easy for sanitation workers but improve their dignity of life style and socio-economic condition.



People visiting stalls at the Organic Fair put together at the Press Club of Odisha in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

OP PHOTO

BOOST TO ORGANIC FARMING

Revenue dept seeks ₹50cr for census, NPR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: A standing committee report of the revenue and disaster management department claimed that it is ready to carry out the census and update the National Population Register (NPR).

The decadal exercise suffered a setback owing to the pandemic that hit all parts of the country and was put on hold by the Union government. The report claimed that the department has prepared the required infrastructure for the same.

In their proposal for funds from the State Budget 2021-22, the department has sought assistance to the tune of Rs 50 crore for the census exercise under the central scheme projects. The department claimed that the Information Technology (IT) systems have been bolstered for the same.

"Census-2021 will be carried out as per Census Act, 1948. The population register shall be updated as per provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship Rules, 2003," the report said.

The report said that the whole exercise was put on hold as per a decision of the Union government.

"As per the direction received from the registrar general and census commissioner of India, ministry of home affairs, the first phase



of Census works i.e. House listing/housing census and updation of National Population Register have been postponed due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic," the report said.

The report further said works are in progress to improve infrastructure at the urban local bodies and tehsil offices for the census and tehsil activities.

"The date of freezing of boundaries had been extended up to 31st December 2020 for ensuing Census 2021. IT infrastructure has been strengthened for smooth conduct of census 2021 and updation of NPR Work at all districts and all tehsils, whereas strengthening of infrastructure of urban local bodies is in progress," added the report.

According to the Union government's decision, census work will cover the entire population in the country while NPR will cover all people except those in the state of Assam.

Transport revenue sees negative growth: Report

A standing committee report on the transport department submitted before the Odisha Assembly claimed that the department has suffered a negative growth in 2020.

The government data of the collection of the same over last five years hinted that in 2020-21 (till December 2020) the state saw a negative growth of -24.86 per cent when compared to the same period last year. The department also said that it had not fixed any target due to COVID 19 situation.

The report claimed that the Motor Vehicle Revenue which included taxes and fees in 2019-20 stood at Rs 1891.67 crore while in 2020-21 (till December 2020) the collection stood at merely Rs973 crore. The department on the other side was witnessing a rise in their revenue collections each year since 2016-17

| YEAR | TARGET | COLLECTION | GROWTH RATE |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 2016-17 | 1300 | 1227.31 cr | 17.64% |
| 2017-18 | 1350 | 1544.60 cr | 25.85% |
| 2018-19 | 1800 | 1765.57 cr | 14.32% |
| 2019-20 | 2025 | 1891.67 cr | 7.14% |
| 2020-21 (Upto Dec 2020) | No target | 973.36 cr | -24.86% |

but suffered a setback due to the pandemic.

At the same time, the enforcement revenue saw a dip during the pandemic year. The department had seen a collection of Rs 85.312 crore as enforcement revenue collected from erring commuters who were found flouting traffic rules. However in 2020-21 (till December 2020), the collection stood at only Rs 21.90 crore.

The department attributed this sudden dip in the collection to the suspended enforcement activities for more than half the year in 2020. The department, however, said during 2020, it issues a total of 79128 e-challans to erring drivers during 2020.

At the same time, the department was also able to suspend a total of 9364 Drivung Licences of traffic rule offenders. It also issued a total of 1,52,321 DLs during the period till December 2020.

HC asks DMs to make surprise visit to jails

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

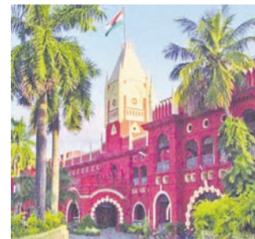
Cuttack, March 13: The Orissa High Court (HC) has directed all district magistrates (DMs) to make surprise visits to jails in their respective jurisdictions and submit reports about the condition of the prisons.

Adjudicating over a 15-year-old writ petition after receiving a recent report submitted by the Amicus Curiae in this matter, the high court has expressed shock and concerns over the precarious conditions prevailing in various jails of the state.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S Muralidhar on March 9 directed all district magistrates to make surprise visits to the jails in their respective jurisdictions and submit reports detailing jail conditions, overcrowding, food, accommodation and recreation of inmates.

"Preferably, these visits (of the DMs) should be unannounced," said an order passed by the high court fixing April 27 for the next hearing. The state government, in the meantime, has been asked to arrange at least one medical visit to each jail and submit a report on it.

The high court has also sought cooperation from Odisha State Legal Aid Services Authority and



the High Court Legal Aid Services Authority for the execution of jail reforms in Odisha as suggested by the Supreme Court in its judgments passed in 2016 and 2017.

Based on Amicus Curiae Gautam Mishra's report of at least five deaths of inmates in Odisha jails during the last five years, the high court has asked the government to inform the court separately as to what actions have been taken in each of these deaths.

The government will also inform the court by the next date as to what instructions it has issued with regard to discontinuance of handcuffing the prisoners in jails or while bringing them to the courts. Handcuffing the prisoners has been banned by the Supreme Court in several judgments, the high court said.

WASSUP TODAY

- BHUBANESWAR**
- Media Sensitisation Workshop on Disability Rehabilitation, Utkal Chamber of Commerce, ID Market, 10am to 1pm
 - State-level Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja Saraswat Sabha by Odisha Sahitya Akademi, Geeta Govinda Sadan, 10.30am
 - Book launch, Buddha Mandir, 11.30am
 - Meet by Ivasion, Institute of Life Sciences, CS Pur, 4pm
 - Women Football Tournament, Kalinga Stadium, 4pm
 - Odia Asmita Utsav, hotel Swosti Premium, 4.30pm
- CUTTACK**
- Meet on children's literature, Kar Palace, Suta Hata, 7.30am
- Programmes/announcements for wassup today may be sent to downtown@orissapost.com for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

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AFFIDAVIT

I, Bhagaban Sukri, employed as TEC (C-W) Grade-II at East Coast Railway, Koraput wants to change my name from Bhagaban Sukri to BHAGABAN PATRA by virtue of affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Koraput dated 09.02.2021.

BDA to set up 2 public gyms in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Aiming to improve recreational infrastructure in the state capital, the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) to develop and maintain two-storey gymnasiums at parks in Kharvela Nagar and Khandagiri.

As per sources, the BDA has invited tenders for erecting and main-

taining about 750 square metres of gymnasiums in the two parks of the city. The two-storey gymnasiums of about 350 square metres each will be provided space within the park under the proposed Children Library project. "The selected entity will provide multi-gym equipment and aerobics and yoga fitness items. Along with the provision of the equipment, the selected operator shall also take the responsibility of the day to maintain the

equipment and area of the gymnasium," a senior BDA official said.

The agency selected will provide certified physical trainers and will conduct regular fitness activities such as zumba, yoga, power aerobics among others. Regular medical check-ups will also be conducted by the agencies in view of the on-going pandemic. Timings for the gym will be from 5 am to 10 am and 5 pm to 9 pm.

Protester throws burning tyre at cops, 2 injured

BHUBANESWAR: Two cops suffered burn injuries after a protesting street vendor threw a burning tyre at them at Aignia square on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar Saturday. The injured policemen have been identified as Amaresh Sahoo and Jitendra Kumar Gochhi. They were immediately rushed to Capital Hospital where they underwent treatment. According to sources, a team from BMC along with some policemen had gone to Aignia area to launch an eviction drive against illegal makeshift shops along the road near Aignia square. Protesting against the drive, the vendors trooped onto Aignia square and staged a roadblock, affecting traffic on the National Highway. After the policemen assisting the BMC team went to the spot to pacify the agitating vendors, suddenly a man from the crowd threw a burning tyre they had put on the road at the cops leading to the mishap.

Mishra moves resolution against farm laws

BHUBANESWAR: The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Narasingha Mishra Saturday submitted a resolution in the Assembly secretariat seeking passing of the same in the house against three controversial farm laws brought by Centre. "The three laws enacted by the central government are unconstitutional and anti-farmer. Since agriculture is a state subject, the central government should not encroach upon the federal and constitutional rights given by the constitution to the state," Mishra said. Therefore, he said, a resolution should be passed in the house urging the central government to withdraw the three laws.

Fire at Sishu Bhawan

CUTTACK: A fire broke out at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Postgraduate Institute of Paediatrics, popularly known as Sishu Bhawan, in the city here Saturday. According to initial reports, the fire was triggered by an electric short circuit at the new SNCU building. However, the blaze was brought under control immediately, sources said. "There was a sparking in an electric board near the special newborn care unit (SNCU) ward. The flame was brought under control immediately," said a fire brigade official.

Looters' gang busted

BHUBANESWAR: The Commissionerate Police Saturday busted a looters' gang with the arrest of six of its members, including a drug store owner. Briefing about the gang's modus operandi, police commissioner Soumendra Priyadarshi said that the gang was targeting bus and train passengers in the twin cities. "They would begin with developing friendship with bus and train passengers and then rob them after offering them spiked drinks or food items. Gold chains weighing around 40gm, 18 strips of sedative drugs, a motorcycle and six cellphones have been recovered from their possession," Priyadarshi said.

'Pvt practice by docs, patient diversion plague Khurda DHH'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, March 13: At a time when the state government is spending crores of rupees to ensure superior healthcare at the government-run facilities, the district headquarters hospital (DHH) here is plagued by a host of issues for which 'private practice by a few of its doctors' as well as 'diversion of patients to private facilities' are being blamed.

Sumitra Nayak of Tangiapada area here has written to the chief district medical officer (CDMO) highlighting the crippling healthcare at the DHH, especially its maternity care centre.

"Pregnant women, experiencing labour, approaching the DHH late at night and being referred to Capital Hospital, citing health complications even though there is hardly any is a common scenario at the facil-

Khurda CDMO said that they would investigate into the allegations and action will be taken against erring doctors if any

ity. On the other hand, the same women deliver babies at private hospitals without any complications," Nayak said, alleging that the referrals to any state-run facility like Capital Hospital is an indirect way to divert patients to nearby private healthcare facilities.

Moreover, the DHH staffers are not at all patient-friendly as fracas between patient/attendant and hospital staffers could be seen almost every other day, the Tangiapada resident added.

Gadadhar Behera and Saroj

Nayak, recent victims of the creaking healthcare at the DHH, said that the government is spending crores of rupees for infra upgrade of the state-run hospitals so as to ensure healthcare to all. However, a precious little is being done on the ground level as it is evident in case of the Khurda DHH.

"After being turned down by the DHH, if the same women can deliver at the private hospitals without any health complications, then why do we have government-run facilities like the DHH? A few officials of the DHH have been working hand-in-glove with some private healthcare facilities to divert the patients there," they alleged.

Sources said although the consulting time at the DHH begins at 8am and ends at 12noon, hardly any doctor remain present there as most of them visit nearby private healthcare facilities from 8am to 9.30am. "As a result critically-ill patients were left with only a few options—wait for hours at the DHH or visit nearby private healthcare facilities and cough up huge sum of money. Anyways, be it private practice or patient diversion, at the end, it's the patient who bears the brunt," said a source.

While confirming of in receipt of the complaint, the CDMO said, "We'll investigate into the veracity of the complaint. Action will be taken against the doctor(s) if any one of them is found practising in private during the official hours."

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Mo School Abhiyan gathers pace

ALUMNI CONTRIBUTE ₹80 CRORE; TOTAL FUND TOUCHES ₹240 CRORE



nancially. Jena said old students of the schools under this Abhiyan have contributed Rs 80 crore. With this, the total fund for the Abhiyan has touched Rs 240 crore.

He added that with such financial contributions of alumni, various infrastructural development works of these schools are being undertaken.

He further revealed that 35,311 projects for these schools had been undertaken and most of the projects have been completed.

A team led by Jena visited a number of schools at Chhatrapur, Belaguntha and Rangelunda blocks.

Marching ahead

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had launched 'Mo School Abhiyan' November 14, 2017. This unique initiative is aimed at bringing alumni, their alma mater and the community around government-run or government-aided schools together, providing a platform for them to contribute financially

CEO of Mo School Abhiyan, Amarjit Jena during his visit to Chhatrapur said, 26,000 schools including 5000 high schools were added to this Abhiyan

Jena further revealed that 35,311 projects for these schools had been undertaken and most of the projects have been completed

mater and the community around government-run or government-aided schools together. Mo School Abhiyan is a platform to encourage inclusion of the alumni and others interested in the betterment of government schools and contribute fi-

The team interacted with teachers, alumni and guardians about improving school development and education environment.

Jena said that alumni are taking leading roles for meeting the purpose and success of the Abhiyan.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, March 13: 'Mo School Abhiyan' launched by the state government is gathering pace in 30 districts of the state while 26,000 schools were added to the programme. This was revealed by CEO of Mo School Abhiyan, Odisha, Amarjit Jena here Saturday.

Jena visited a government school in Chhatrapur. He said 5000 high schools are included in it. In the last three years, good works are being done for these schools, he asserted.

Notably, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had launched the 'Mo School Abhiyan' November 14, 2017.

This unique initiative is aimed at bringing alumni, their alma

Nuapada: Villagers warn of leaving Odisha alleging admin apathy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, March 13: Residents of several villages near Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary in Nuapada district have warned of leaving Odisha Saturday alleging administrative apathy towards local issues.

The villagers of Sunabeda and Soseng panchayats alleged that they are being deprived of basic amenities for several decades. They have been running from pillar to post, but their problems are not being addressed.

They have decided to leave Odisha to side with the neighbouring Chhattisgarh if their long-standing demands are not addressed by the district administration soon, a villager of Soseng panchayat said.

Basic amenities like road, school, hospital and drinking water are still a day dream for the villagers, the locals alleged.

"We are deprived of our basic rights. The government has been making excuses citing that no roads can be built here as it comes under the sanctuary area. We are treated well before elections but after the polls are over, nothing is done," a villager of Sunabeda, Bijay Jhakar fumed.

"Even after 70 years of independence, we are deprived of basic facilities. In a meeting attended by the people of both the panchayats, Sunabeda and Soseng, we decided to leave Odisha for a decent living," Sunabeda sarpanch Tilisingh Jhakar expressed in a similar vein.

Parking issue: Trader shot at by rtd lecturer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Mar 13: In a shocking incident, a trader was shot at by a retired lecturer over a trivial issue of parking vehicles at Choudhury Sahi under the Town police limits here Saturday.

The victim was identified as Anand Singh, 43, proprietor of an electronic goods showroom in the area. He sustained critical injuries in the incident and was admitted to the district headquarters hospital.

Later, he was shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) in Cuttack after his health condition deteriorated. The accused was identified as Lakshman Behera, 64, a retired lecturer by profession.

Reports said that a verbal spat broke out between Singh and

his neighbour, Lakshman Behera, over vehicle parking at Sanjay Heights apartment near Choudhury Sahi, Saturday morning. Enraged, Behera threatened Singh of severe consequences.

Singh was attending to his business at his showroom when all of a sudden, Behera arrived at his shop in the evening and opened fire at his stomach. The businessman sustained bullet injuries and fell unconscious on the spot.

Residents rushed to the spot and rescued him in critical condition and rushed him to the district headquarters hospital. Later, he was shifted to Cuttack.

On being informed, police conducted a probe at the spot and detained Behera for questioning. Town police IIC Subhranshu Sekhar Nayak said.

Businessman shot at, critically hurt

Umerkote: In an untoward incident Friday night, a businessman was critically injured after being allegedly shot at by three miscreants at Jharigaon road in Umerkote of Nabarangpur district. The injured businessman was identified as T Sanjeev Subudhi. According to police, Subudhi was standing in front of Punjab National Bank's branch office in Umerkote. All of a sudden, three bike-borne miscreants opened fire at him at around 10 pm. The wrongdoers fled the spot soon after committing the crime. Subudhi received a bullet injury on his back in the incident. He fell unconscious on the spot following the firing, an eyewitness said. Locals rescued Subudhi in critical condition from a pool of blood. The businessman was immediately rushed to the Umerkote community healthcare centre (CHC) for treatment. Later, he was shifted to Koraput, after his health condition deteriorated. Umerkote police have registered a case in this connection and launched a manhunt to nab the three miscreants. The reason behind the fatal attack has not been ascertained yet.

People feed on stream water in Swabhiman Anchal



POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, March 13: A lot of development has taken place in various pockets of Swabhiman Anchal in Malkangiri after Gurupriya Setu was commissioned. However, there are many remote villages in hilly terrains which are deprived of safe drinking water. People in some villages still depend on stream water, a report said.

According to the report, Malkangiri district is a hilly and forested region. The area has Kalimela, Satiguda dams, rivers like Poteru, Saberi, Pangam and several streams. In monsoon, areas close to these rivers are flooded. But in summer, they

Many villages under nine panchayats have been awaiting basic facilities like roads and drinking water. In the absence of tube wells, people have no way but to fed on stream water

are hit hard by water crisis.

Before Gurupriya setu was made functional in 2018, there was no tube well and piped drinking water projects in

scores of villages under nine panchayats of Swabhiman Anchal.

Thereafter, various developmental works like roads and tube wells were made in many villages while many villages have been awaiting basic facilities like roads and drinking water. In the absence of tube wells, people have fed on stream water.

Meanwhile, tube wells have gone defunct in the area, forcing people to drink stream water. According to the RWSS, there are 12,223 tube wells in seven blocks. 34 of the tube wells have gone defunct.

Besides, 48 drinking water projects out of total 362 have been out of order. Moreover, 100 solar-powered drinking water projects are not working now.

Locals alleged that water of some tube wells is not fit for drinking as the water has a more ferrous content.

According to official sources, a population of over 6 lakh is in 1058 villages under seven blocks of the district.

Ensuring drinking water in the hilly and forested pockets has been a challenge for the administration particularly in summer.

On the other hand, the administration has been pushing road connectivity in remote areas on a priority basis so that other development activities are carried forward.

THE RAGING BLAZE



A firefighter trying to douse forest fire at Chitapari jungle on the outskirts of Balimela town in Malkangiri district, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Flights from Jharsuguda to Chennai from March 28

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, March 13: Good news for western Odisha residents as flight service from the Veer Surendra Sai Airport to Chennai is all set to start from March 28. SpiceJet will provide this service.

SpiceJet had launched flights from the VSS Airport to Mumbai and Bangalore January 12. Overwhelmed by the business and the number of fliers it received, the airline major has decided to extend its service to Chennai.

The service will be available each day of the week. Online ticket booking for flights has already begun.

The flight will take off from Chennai at 1:10 pm and touch down at the VSS Airport at 3:00 pm. Similarly, it will take off from the VSS Airport at 3:30 pm and land at Chennai at 5:00 pm.

Sources close to the VSS Airport said that IndiGo is next in line to provide flight service from the VSS Airport.

Notably, the VSS Airport, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2018, is the second full-fledged airport in Odisha after the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar.

Lone tusker creates mayhem in Rupsa

Rupsa: A lone elephant triggered panic in Rupsa area of Balasore. The animal has damaged many houses and crops at Lachmankhunta, Paschimasmulia and Jahada villages under Rupsa block. The tusker came from Mayurbhanj a few days ago. Forest officials and people managed to drive it away, but it came back again. Earlier, a herd of elephants had destroyed trees, plants and crops in this area. Since then, people have been spending sleepless nights. Locals demanded forest department take effective step to prevent elephant menace in the area.



4 held for setting forest on fire in Boudh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, March 13: Four persons were arrested for starting forest fire in Mundeswar jungle under Purunakatak range in Boudh district Saturday.

Following widespread concern over wildfires in Similipal sanctuary in Mayurbhanj district and in other reserve forests in several districts, the forest departments in those affected districts took several steps to check the fires.

In its effort to check the wildfires, the forest division in Boudh



district has also formed a special forest squad. The squad is conducting raids in various forests. While exercising their du-

ties, the members of the squad spotted four persons trying to flee from the spot after seeing them. However, they were all caught. A matchbox was also seized from their possession.

While the identities of the arrested persons are yet to be revealed by the forest department, it was learnt that Purunakatak Range Officer Nihar Ranjan Mallick, Boudh ACF Jitendra Kumar Behera and other forest staff conducted the raids.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
SIGNALLING WORK
Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2021-03, Dated: 09.03.2021
Name of Work: SIGNALLING ZONAL WORK FOR MURIBAHAL - ARANG MAHANADI SECTION UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER / SIGNAL / KANTABANJI IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR ONE YEAR.
Tender Value (₹): ₹ 25,28,150/-, EMD: Nil, Cost of Tender Document: Nil.
Date and time of closing of tender: 15:00 hrs of 31.03.2021.
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.
NOTE: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.
Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.
Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer (Signal) Sambalpur PR-619/L/20-21

OFFICE OF THE REGULATED MARKET COMMITTEE, ANANDAPUR
At/P.O.: Ghasipura, Dist.- Keonjhar, PIN No. - 758015
E-mail Address: rnc.anandapur@gmail.com
TENDER CALL NOTICE
No. 92/RMCA Dtd.12.03.2021
1. Name of the Work : Civil Work
2. Number of Works : 05
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.18.83 lakh to Rs.46.62 lakh
4. Period of Completion : 04 to 06 Calendar Months
5. Date & time of availability of Bid : From 3.00 P.M. of 12.03.2021 to 5.30 P.M. of 23.03.2021
Documents in RMC Office
6. Last date & time for receipt of Bids : By 5.30 P.M. of 23.03.2021
7. Date of Opening of Bid : 11.00 A.M. of 24.03.2021
8. Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Sub-Collector, Anandapur -cum-Chairman, RMC, Anandapur
Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
Sd./- Sub-Collector, Anandapur-cum-Chairman, RMC, Anandapur

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA
e-mail: eerwsskld@gmail.com, eerwss_kld@nic.in, Phone No.: 06670-230784
INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e-TENDERING
Bid Identification No.42/EE/RWSS/2020-21/Bpt Dated 06.03.2021
01. Name of the work: As per ANNEXURE-A

| Procurement Officer | Bid Identification No. | Availability of tender online for bidding on office hour only | | Date of opening (Technical Bid) |
|--|---|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | From | To | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna | 42/EE/RWSS/2020-21/Bpt Dated 06.03.2021 | 15.03.2021 10.00 A.M. | 30.03.2021 05.30 P.M. | 31.03.2021 10.00 A.M. onwards |

Cost of tender paper & payment of EMD to be made online payment system. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>. The original documents should be scanned and uploaded.
Sd./-Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna OIPR-25005/11/0020/2021

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, NIMAPARA

Letter No. 665 Date: 12.03.2021

DETAIL TENDER CALL NOTICE

The Block Development Officer, Nimapara invites sealed percentage (%) rate basis tender for construction of additional class rooms of School buildings/construction of School building/Construction of College building/repair & renovation of Nigamananda Mahila Mahavidyalaya of Nimapara Block in Single Cover system from registered and eligible 'B', 'C' and 'D' Class contractors of the State. Tender documents will be available from 15.03.2021 to 30.03.2021 at cash section of Nimapara Block during office hours from 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. Bids received shall be opened at 11.00 A.M. on 05.04.2021 in the office of Block Development Officer, Nimapara in the presence of the bidders or their authorised representatives. For further details, interested bidders are requested to visit the official website: <http://www.puri.nic.in>.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Project | Value of Work (in Rs.) (Lakhs) | EMD to be Deposited 1% (in Rs.) | Cost of Tender Paper/Bid Document (in Rs.) | Class of Contractor | Time of Completion |
|---------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 |
| 1 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Balanga Girls High School | 11.20 | 11200 | 6000 | C & D | 4 Calendar Months |
| 2 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Bhatbandha High School, Chanrapada | 11.54 | 11540 | 6000 | C & D | 4 Calendar Months |
| 3 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Chintamani Bidyapitha, Rench | 11.54 | 11540 | 6000 | C & D | 4 Calendar Months |
| 4 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Dahijanga High School, Dhaleswar | 11.90 | 11900 | 6000 | C & D | 4 Calendar Months |
| 5 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Prachi Balika Bidyapitha, Tulashipur | 11.37 | 11370 | 6000 | C & D | 4 Calendar Months |
| 6 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Nahantara High School, Antuara | 11.54 | 11540 | 6000 | C & D | 4 Calendar Months |
| 7 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Nilakantheswar MP High School, Dighalo | 15.96 | 15960 | 6000 | C & D | 6 Calendar Months |
| 8 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of SSP High School, Dakshinaradas | 16.91 | 16910 | 6000 | C & D | 6 Calendar Months |
| 9 | Construction of Addl. Class rooms of Utkalmuni High School, Nuasantha | 17.30 | 17300 | 6000 | C & D | 6 Calendar Months |
| 10 | Construction of School building of Patitapaban Seva Sangha Spl. School, Chanrapada | 26.66 | 26660 | 6000 | B & C | 6 Calendar Months |
| 11 | Construction of Arts Block Building at Balanga College | 19.78 | 19780 | 6000 | C & D | 6 Calendar Months |
| 12 | Repair & renovation of Nigamananda Mahila (Degree) Mahavidyalaya, Charichhaka | 18.64 | 18640 | 6000 | C & D | 6 Calendar Months |

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Nimapara

FOCUS ECONOMY

KEEP FUEL OUT OF GST



If petroleum products are brought under the ambit of GST, it will prevent the states from raising revenues from VAT and other taxes

Thus, autonomy acts as an incentive for states to spend money efficiently.

The states today have freedom to choose which of these policies they will adopt. Bringing oil under GST will end this autonomy of states and remove the incentive of efficiency.

Further there is a crisis in the making. The Union government had estimated that the revenue from GST will increase by 14 per cent every year. Accordingly, it had promised the states that it would compensate them if their share of GST will increase by less than 14 per cent. This compensation is to be paid for the first five years of GST ending on June 30, 2022. The states will have to stand on their own feet after that time. The actual increase in GST revenues has been about five per cent per year. There exists today a shortfall of nine per cent from the estimated 14 per cent increase. Thus, on June 30, 2022 the states will see a huge drop in their revenues. The receipt will decline on that date because the actual GST collections have risen only by about 5 per cent. In this situation the states will scramble to raise additional revenues. One obvious source would be higher VAT on petroleum products. Bringing oil under GST will prevent the states from raising revenues from this source and cause much pain.

The two main points are that bringing oil under GST will lead to lower prices and higher consumption of oil and the government will have to collect the same revenue by imposing higher taxes on other commodities. The resulting higher consumption of oil will make us more dependent on imports and affect our economic sovereignty. Secondly, the reduced autonomy of the states will act as a disincentive for them to attain efficiency in expenditures.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore. Views are personal.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that bringing petroleum products under GST will lead to initial sacrifices but will beget benefits in the long run. A report of the State Bank of India has calculated that the initial loss of revenue will be to the tune of ₹1 lakh crore. At present the Union government collects excise duty and the states collect VAT or Sales Tax on the price of oil after adding excise duty. This leads to a cascading effect because an increase in excise duty leads to automatic increase in VAT as well. Bringing petroleum products under GST will merge the two taxes and then there shall not occur any cascading effect. The question, however, remains wherefrom will the loss of ₹1 lakh crore revenue be made up? The ₹1 lakh crore presently being collected from oil will have to be collected from increasing GST collection from cloth, paper, bikes and other items. In other words, bringing petroleum products under GST will not lead to a reduction of taxation. It will only lead to shifting of tax from petroleum to other commodities. The government will have to decide whether to collect the tax from oil or from cloth and paper.

It needs to be noted that we import 85 per cent of the oil consumed by us. Thus, reduction of tax on oil will lead to lower price, increased imports and will challenge our economic sovereignty. Instead of increasing, we need to reduce our consumption of oil so that we are less dependent on imports. Thus reduction of tax on oil as proposed by bringing it under GST will push us in the opposite direction and make us more dependent on imports.

In this backdrop we need to understand the statement made by Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan that bringing oil under GST will lead to the development of the oil sector. Indeed the reduction of price of oil will lead to higher consumption. Instead of

installing solar panels, an industrialist may find it profitable to install a diesel generator. The question, however, is whether we should seek such development of the oil sector or we should, instead, seek the development of the solar energy sector? As said above, increased consumption of oil will be counterproductive. We should instead aim for improving the quality of oil consumption. Petroleum may be used only in such locations and uses that cannot be energized by alternative sources of energy such as solar or wind power. For example, I had purchased a small 500 watt petrol generator for my house in the eighties. At that time the solar panels were very expensive and not a viable option. Today, I have installed a 240 watt solar panel instead because solar panels have become relatively cheap while the price of petrol has gone up. The use of petroleum is justified only for such uses that cannot be served by other domestic and renewable sources of energy such as transporting goods to remote areas.

This much is true that bringing oil under GST will lead to the same price of oil in the entire country. An industrialist will not have to consider the price of oil while

making a decision to establish a factory. This will lead to greater efficiency in allocation of resources. At the same time, this will remove the autonomy of the states in deciding the VAT collected on oil by them. At present some states collect taxes at a higher rate and use the revenues for securing public good such as forest conservation, water harvesting, vaccination or providing better law and order. Other states collect low VAT on oil. Their logic is that low VAT and low price of oil will encourage industrialists to establish factories in their state. The people will have higher disposable income and attain higher standard of living as well. Both considerations are justified. Welfare is obtained by high taxes and higher expenditures on public facilities; as well as by lower taxes and more encouragement to businesses. However, the people of a state that spends money efficiently will be benefitted by collecting high VAT; while the people of a state that spends money inefficiently will be at a loss by higher VAT. Thus, autonomy of VAT acts as an incentive for states to spend efficiently. The state government can explain to its taxpayers that they are getting benefits from the higher expenditures.



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

BRINGING PETROLEUM PRODUCTS UNDER GST WILL NOT LEAD TO A REDUCTION OF TAXATION. IT WILL ONLY LEAD TO SHIFTING OF TAX FROM PETROLEUM TO OTHER COMMODITIES



Our life should be governed by the love for the Truth and the thirst for Light.

THE MOTHER

Inconsistent ideology

The BJP won 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal. It is hard to see why it will not win the Assembly elections because it has so much more resource than the rest (more than 90 per cent of electoral bond money, which is the anonymous but legal funding by corporates to parties, according to RTI reports) and also the power of the national administration. The prime minister says he will bring real change to Bengal. Perhaps he will. The interesting thing to me is that his party has never defined what this change is.

Formed in 1951, the Jana Sangh/BJP manifestos move effortlessly back and forth from grand and formless expression like 'national rejuvenation yagna' directly to things like running more trains with third-class compartments as opposed to air-conditioned ones, pushing the benefits of cow manure and asking linguists to introduce technical and scientific terms based on Sanskrit to replace English.

The party's ideologue, Deendayal Upadhyaya did not want states to exist. In his Integral Humanism lectures, he has said: "According to the first part of the Constitution, 'India that is Bharat will be a federation of States', i.e. Bihar Mata, Banga Mata, Punjab Mata, Kannada Mata, Tamil Mata, all put together make Bharat Mata. This is ridiculous." He did not tell us if we removed the states what mechanism of administration would come between the Union government and the village.

In the first manifesto the party identified black-marketing, profiteering and nepotism as key problems. Over time, the Jana Sangh drops reference to these problems without saying whether they had been solved or had become less relevant to the party.

The first point on agriculture of its first manifesto calls for 'a country-wide campaign to educate and enthuse the cultivator about the necessity of harder work for more production'. Later it is for 'encouragement of the use of mechanical appliances in agriculture'. However, still later it says that 'tractors will be used only to break virgin soil. Their use for normal ploughing purposes will be discouraged' (1954). This was of course because it was trying to protect the bull and the ox from slaughter. In 1951, prohibition of cow slaughter was explained as something needed 'to make the cow an economic unit of agricultural life'. In 1954, the text was more religious and called cow protection a 'pious duty'.

In 1954, and again in 1971, the Jana Sangh resolved to limit the maximum income of all Indian citizens to ₹2,000 per month and the minimum to ₹100, maintaining a 20:1 ratio. It would continue working on reducing this gap till it reached 10:1 which was the ideal gap and all Indians could only have incomes inside this range based on their position. Additional income earned by individuals over this limit would be taken by the government for development. The party would also limit the size of residential houses in cities and not allow plots of more than 1000 square yards.

In 1954 the party said it would repeal the first amendment to the Constitution that curbed freedom of speech by imposing 'reasonable restrictions'. This amendment essentially took away freedom of expression because the list of what is seen as a reasonable restriction was far too wide and broad. The Jana Sangh sensed that it was not something that could be allowed to go unchallenged. However, after 1954, this demand that the first amendment be repealed and freedom of speech, association and assembly be restored to Indians disappeared from the Jana Sangh manifestos.

Interestingly, the Jana Sangh said it would also repeal preventive detention laws which it said were absolutely in contradiction to individual liberty. This promise was made repeatedly in the 1950s. In time, the Sangh and BJP became the most enthusiastic champions of preventive detention and laws like UAPA.

Even though the idols were smuggled into the mosque on the night of 22-23 December 1949, a few months before the Jana Sangh was formed, there was no reference to Ayodhya or a Ram temple there in any of the Jana Sangh manifestos from 1951 to 1980.

Its idea of defence policy came through such demands as compulsory military training for all boys and girls, removal of licences for possessing muzzle-loading guns (an eighteenth century weapon) and expansion of the National Cadet Corps.

Interestingly, like Atmanirbhar Bharat, Jana Sangh's swadeshi meant giving subsidies to local industries and also tariff protection. Import of consumer goods and luxury goods would be discouraged. Labour rights including strikes and lock-outs would be discouraged.

In 1957, the party announced it would introduce 'revolutionary changes' to the economic order, which 'will be in keeping with Bharatiya values of life'. However, these were not elaborated on nor was this theme of revolutionary change picked up again in any future manifesto. Culturally, the party stood firmly against alcohol and sought nationwide prohibition. And it wanted English to be abolished and replaced in all spheres by local languages and especially, Hindi.

There is no comment whether positive or negative on the Constitution, which was adopted months before the first Jana Sangh manifesto, or even about the ideals it represents. Ambedkar had proposed modest changes to Hindu personal law, especially on the question of inheritance for women. He identified the two dominant forms of traditional inheritance law and modified one of them to make inheritance fairer for women. In its 1951 manifesto the Jana Sangh opposed this reform.

While it signals anti-Muslim intent, the Jana Sangh did not have the transparency of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its open dislike of Muslims. The Jana Sangh was unable to express its majoritarianism as clearly and in as full-throated a fashion as the BJP was later able to. This was because it lacked a specific programme on the back of which to mobilise anti-Muslim sentiment, such as the campaign against the Babri Masjid. It was not important as an issue all this time. The lack of a mass-mobilisation issue nationally meant that the Jana Sangh remained a minor political player, getting only a few seats in each election. In the last election it contested under its own name, in 1971, the Jana Sangh won 22 seats and 7 per cent of the vote, making it only the fourth largest party. It was only under Advani and then especially under Modi, that the BJP became the mass-based electoral force it has become, from the cadre-based party that was the Jana Sangh. It is remarkable that this should have been achieved in the absence of a coherent, consistent ideology and even a definition of what parivartan it stood for and would bring.



Aakar Patel

While it signals anti-Muslim intent, the Jana Sangh did not have the transparency of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its open dislike of Muslims. The Jana Sangh was unable to express its majoritarianism as clearly and in as full-throated a fashion as the BJP was later able to

SPECTRUM CONFLICT

Is nuclear peace with North Korea possible?



Bennett Ramberg

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW THAT KIM WILL NOT ABOLISH HIS NUCLEAR ARSENAL, OR PERMIT A VERIFIABLE NUCLEAR FREEZE, AS SOME HAVE CALLED FOR

North Korea's recent public displays of new intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles have raised fresh concerns about the risks the regime in Pyongyang poses to the US mainland. As President Joe Biden's administration reviews US policy toward the DPRK over the past four years and draws what lessons it can from Donald Trump's nuclear summitry with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, it should consider a new arms-control approach.

The failure of Trump's efforts should surprise no one. After all, prior US administrations' initiatives to stop North Korea's nuclear-arms programme – including Bill Clinton's 'Agreed Framework,' the six-party talks during George W. Bush's administration, and Barack Obama's 'Leap Day' agreement – came to naught. Quite the contrary: North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003, and has failed to abide by a 1992 accord with South Korea pledging to keep the Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons.

All this diplomatic activity leading nowhere raises a fundamental question: Does nuclear-arms control have a future on the peninsula?

It does, but not as currently practiced. It should be clear by now that Kim will not abolish his nuclear arsenal, or permit a verifiable nuclear freeze, as some have called

for. The reason is simple: as with all nuclear-armed countries today, nuclear weapons remain the regime's ultimate security blanket. The bomb also provides Kim with leverage over South Korea. The challenge, then, is to ensure that North Korea never uses its nuclear arsenal.

Realising this aim will require a combination of classic deterrence and new diplomatic thinking – specifically, a normalisation of US-North Korea ties. America currently provides deterrence on the Korean Peninsula through its offshore air- and sea-based nuclear umbrella over South Korea, while nearly 30,000 US ground and air troops in the country supplement more than three million active and reserve South Korean troops.

But relying on deterrence alone against North Korea cannot assuredly prevent or manage missteps, because the country's isolation from the rest of the world breeds unique perils. As menacing as North Korea is today, Cold War-era China under Mao Zedong's leadership posed a far greater threat to American interests. Mao intervened in the Korean War against the US, fomented the Taiwan Strait crises later in the 1950s, and encouraged wars of national liberation against Western powers. When President John F. Kennedy's administration entered office in 1961, it regarded China as a rising nuclear bête noire and considered military action against it.

But America did not bomb away, and Richard Nixon's subsequent opening to China and the normalisation of relations during Jimmy Carter's presidency neutralised US concerns. Despite the absence of a bilateral nuclear-arms limitation treaty, China's arsenal remains largely a low-level issue amid current Sino-American tensions.

Likewise, US diplomatic influence over Pakistan, and its ties with India, helped slow the momentum toward nuclear war during the 1999 Kargil conflict and in the aftermath of the 2001 Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament.

To be sure, the centrality of North Korea's nuclear enterprise to the survival of Kim's regime would complicate any effort to normalise diplomatic relations. Then there are questions about how to build a diplomatic relationship. Can or should the process begin with the opening of embassies, in the hope that this will engender confidence and enable the two countries to address substantive issues? Or can negotiators get down to details immediately? Either way, two priorities stand out. North Korea needs relief from international economic sanctions, and the US needs to eliminate North Korea's capability to strike it with intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

Sanctions, domestic mismanagement, natural disasters, and

COVID-19 have left North Korea's economy – by Kim's own admission – in desperate need of repair. For America, which currently lacks effective ballistic-missile defenses, the prospect of being in North Korea's nuclear crosshairs is unacceptable. Could this point to a possible trade-off, namely the lifting of sanctions in exchange for the elimination of rockets? Such a deal would leave North Korea's theater nuclear force untouched and help mend the country's economy while reducing the risk of a preemptive American strike. It would also immunise the US against a possible North Korean ICBM attack, leaving it better placed to meet South Korean and Japanese security needs.

To determine whether Kim's regime would be open to serious negotiation, the Biden administration could initially endorse so-called Track II diplomacy – former US government and non-government interlocutors meeting informally with North Korean officials in third-party countries. If the outreach sparked interest in Pyongyang, the door to formal talks would open. The challenge will be to convince leaders on both sides that diplomatic normalisation leading to an ICBM-sanctions trade-off is the best path forward.

The writer is the author of Destruction of Nuclear Energy Facilities in War.

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Sinha's final innings

Sir, In a democracy everybody is free to join any political party. There are political families where one member of the family remains with the ruling party and other in the opposition party. Yashwant Sinha is a former bureaucrat and Union finance minister. What circumstances led the veteran of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to join the Trinamool Congress (TMC) of Mamata Banerjee is worth pondering. This is not a good sign for the saffron party. Everybody knows people try to climb up the ladder of political ambition by stepping on someone. There is dissatisfaction in the party and this is the tip of the iceberg. Bengal politics is different from other states. Maybe to entice Bihari votes Yashwant Sinha was roped in by the TMC. In the last Bihar elections Shatrughan Sinha left the BJP to join the Congress. Whatever be the outcome of the elections, Yashwant Sinha is playing his final innings.

Sunil Pradhan, KHARIAR (NUAPADA)

Draw red lines for China

Sir, This is in reference to the news item "Quad roots for free Indo-Pacific" published in Orissa POST on March 13. The first summit meeting of the Quad countries – India, Japan, the US and Australia – cements its role as a key pillar of the free and open Indo-Pacific architecture. While Trump's dispensation largely sought to push the Quad in a military direction, Biden is seeking to expand its scope and adopt a holistic approach to push back against an aggressive Beijing. This is smart strategy as military coordination without an economic and technological anchor is insufficient to meet the China challenge. The new accent is on resilient supply chains, emerging and critical technologies, maritime security and climate change. Hence, the idea is to draw red lines for China and insulate other countries from becoming dependent on Beijing's economic and technological patronage. This will offer members market access and technology transfers as an alternative to Chinese products. India should fully capitalise on these coalitions to obtain cutting edge technology, boost domestic R&D and kick-start its own industrial reforms. Also, India is on the right track in seeking to firewall critical sectors from Chinese equipment and cyber attacks – such as the recent intrusions into India's power infrastructure. With telecom forming the backbone of a modern, digital economy, this sector must be shielded from predatory Chinese activities.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

WISDOM CORNER

- Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold. **LEO TOLSTOY**
- One who deceives will always find those who allow themselves to be deceived. **NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI**
- Time plays a role in almost every decision. And some decisions define your attitude about time. **JOHN CALE**

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

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

DMK poll promises: 75% jobs for locals, steps to ban NEET



DMK president MK Stalin releases the party's election manifesto, Saturday.

AGENCIES

Chennai, March 13: The opposition DMK in Tamil Nadu Saturday released its party's manifesto for the April 6 Assembly elections in the state, making a slew of promises including free computer tablets with data card for students and a law to provide 75 percent of jobs in the state to locals.

Financial assistance of Rs 25,000 to one lakh persons going on pilgrimage to major Hindu temples, increase in maternity leave period and assistance, cut in fuel prices and various promises made by the Dravidian party. Releasing the manifesto, DMK President Stalin said if his party was voted to power, first generation graduates will be given preference in government jobs, reservation in private sector will also be insisted and promised subsidies for small farmers.

"Tablets with free data will be provided to government school and college students," Stalin told a press conference at party headquarters Anna Arivalayam.

If voted, the party will reduce the rates of petrol and diesel by Rs 5 and Rs 4 per litre, he said in an apparent reference to tax cuts. Also, a subsidy of Rs 100 towards LPG cylinder will be provided.

Steps will be taken to expedite the submission of a committee (Arumughasamy Committee) report formed to probe the circumstances leading to the death of Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa in 2016, he said.

Further, a law to set aside 75 percent of jobs in industrial houses for locals will be passed if the DMK was voted to power, he added. Promising an allocation of Rs 1000 crore towards renovation and consecration of Hindu temples, Stalin assured to provide Rs 200 crore for churches and mosques.

Better water management, supply of clean drinking water, increase in women's reservation in government jobs, hiking old age pension and establishment of Kalaignar Unavagam eateries as part of hunger eradication were the other assurances provided by the DMK.

Man booked for selling false Covid negative reports in Gujarat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rajkot, March 13: An FIR has been registered against a laboratory agent for allegedly selling false COVID-19 negative reports to people in Gujarat's Rajkot city, police said Saturday.

According to the police, the accused Parag Joshi managed to procure COVID-19 negative certificates for people who needed them for Rs 1,500 each.

Based on a complaint lodged by deputy medical officer Dr Parag Churnara, a case has been registered against Joshi and other unidentified accused under relevant provisions of the IPC, Disaster Management Act and Gujarat Medical Practitioners' Act at Gandhigram police station, an official said.



Joshi ran a home sample collection centre and sold COVID-19 negative reports to people without collecting their swab samples, he said.

"We have learnt that the sample of a different person was sent to a laboratory with the documents of the person in whose name the report was to be issued," the official said.

The laboratory would then issue a report in the name of the person whose documents it received, he said. The accused also did not have a licence to run the sample collection centre, and was hence also booked under the Gujarat Medical Practitioners' Act, the official said, adding that further probe is underway.

Guj's alcohol permit applicants double in 3 yrs

THE STATE GOVERNMENT GIVES LIQUOR PERMIT TO A PATIENT ONLY AFTER THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE LOCAL MEDICAL BOARD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, March 13: A new data presented in the Gujarat state Assembly points out towards the helplessness against the growing number of alcoholism patients, and the failure of the healthcare system. The number of new alcoholism patients in Gujarat has more than doubled in just three years' period, from October 2017 to September 2020.

From October 2017 to September 2018, a total of 1,717 patients applied for liquor to be obtained under the health permit, which is issued to an alcoholic patient. Also, from October 2019 to September 2020, there were a total of 3,587 patients who were issued such a permit, which is more than double.

The state government gives liquor permit to a patient only after the recommendation of the local medical board. These figures were released in the Gujarat Assembly during the ongoing budget session.

Shailesh Parmar, the Congress legislator from Danilimda, had sought the information regarding the health permits issued from October 2017 to September 2020 in Gujarat.

It's not only a worrying picture for the new alcoholism patients in Gujarat, but also a matter of concern that there has been no improvement in the patients who are already having the permits and are being treated.

The number of such patients is also constantly on the rise as the



renewal of these permits rose by 33 per cent from a total of 6,259 in 2017-18 to 8,309 permits in 2018-19, which further climbed by 23 per

cent as 10,189 permits were renewed. According to the renewed and fresh permits issued in 2019-20,

the state has a total of around 13,776 alcoholism patients who needs alcohol for their treatment.

The maximum patients are from the financial capital Ahmedabad - 5,101. Surat has the second highest patients, 1,600, followed by Vadodara with 1,345, Rajkot 717, Kutch-Bhuj 691, Anand 566, Porbandar 564, Jamnagar 444, Bharuch 433 and Bhavnagar with 350 patients.

While the patients of alcoholism increasing, the state government is also earning through the health permits issued to them. During the said period of three years, the government earned around Rs 20 crore. The new patient is charged Rs 1,000 for obtaining the health permit, whereas the charges for its renewal is Rs 3,000.

Haasan targets Muslim, Dalit vote banks



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 13: Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) chief Kamal Haasan is expecting to make inroads into the Muslim and Dalit vote banks in Tamil Nadu, which is quite vital for electoral gains in the April 6 Assembly polls.

Haasan, who is a Brahmin himself, has been vocal in extending his support to both the Muslim and Dalit communities.

During the election campaign in the 2019 general elections, the actor-turned-politician, while speaking at a public rally at

Aruvkarurichy which has a large Muslim presence, had said that the first 'terrorist' of the country was a Hindu in an oblique reference to Nathuram Godse.

Although the statement had not endeared Haasan to the Muslim community, but his actions and support on several issues have made the community feel that he will support them.

Abdul Basith Khan, a Muslim trader and an activist of the Jamat Islami Hind, while speaking to IANS said: "Of course we love and respect Kamal Haasan as he had publicly stated that the seeds of extremism in India were sown by Godse by murdering Mahatma Gandhi." There are around 5.85 per cent Muslims in Tamil Nadu, going by the 2011 census.

While there are several Muslim political parties including the Indian Union Muslim League, Manithaneya Makkal Katchi, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslemeen (AIMIM) and Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) in the fray in Tamil Nadu, the MNM chief has a special support base among the Muslims and the star is also banking on it.

While there is no dominance of any Muslim vote bank in any of the constituencies of Tamil Nadu, the 2,000 to 20,000 votes in some

constituencies from the Muslim community can be a game changer in more than 100 constituencies of the 234 Assembly seats of the state. Kamal Haasan is clearly targeting the Muslim vote bank and his public postures in issues like CAA and Ram Janmabhoomi is to attract this base.

The Dalits are a stronger community in Tamil Nadu with around a 20 per cent vote share. While the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) led by Thol Thirumavalavan MP is the prominent Dalit party of Tamil Nadu, Dalit votes are divided among the DMK, Congress and AIADMK with a small share to the BJP too. Haasan has invoked the memories of several Tamil Dalit heroes and is trying to capitalize on their popularity to get into the Dalit vote base. Vaidyanathan K, MNM office bearer at Arkonam, told IANS: "Haasan is certainly a good vote-catcher and issues like this will take him forward and we expect Dalits voting in large numbers for our candidates."

The MNM is contesting 154 seats in the Assembly polls and the party leaders are targeting both the Muslim and Dalit communities to get their support to ensure smooth wins for the party candidates.

Three adolescents get raped in Guj everyday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, March 13: The Vibrant state of Gujarat is also vibrant as far as rape of adolescent girls is concerned. The state has seen more than three rapes of adolescent girls everyday during the past five years. According to the state government figures released in the ongoing Assembly session there were 6,215 incidents of adolescent girls raped in the period from October 2015 to September 2020.

Congress MLA from Petlad, Niranjan Patel had raised the question before Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani as to how many rape incidents had occurred from October 2015 till September 2020 in Gujarat, how many persons were still to be nabbed and what action did the government take to curb such incidents.

In reply the Gujarat government's home department informed that during the said period a total of 6,215 adolescent girls were raped in Gujarat. Practically this amounts to more than three rapes of teenage girls everyday in Gujarat which boasts of having coined the slogan, 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'.

The maximum number of rapes were registered in the largest city, Ahmedabad with 977 cases. The highest number of gang rapes was also registered in Ahmedabad, 9 during the same period. The Diamond City, Surat was second in line with 753 rapes in 5 years. Surat also saw 7 gang rapes in the same

There were 6,215 incidents of adolescent girls being raped in the period from October 2015 to September 2020

period. Bhavnagar witnessed 432 rapes of adolescent girls from 2015 to 2020 and 6 incidents of gang rape. The Saurashtra capital, Rajkot witnessed 311 incidents of teenage girls raped and 4 incidents of gang rape. The North Gujarat city of Mehsana registered 272 rapes, Rajkot rural 271, Vadodara city 270, Ahmedabad rural 214, Chhota Udaipur 179, Surat rural 174, Morbi 171, Jamnagar 163 and Patan 153 rapes of adolescent girls.

Out of these 6,215, the Gujarat Police still has to arrest a total of 209 persons connected with the crimes. In response to what steps did the government take to prevent such crimes, the home department replied that 39 women police stations were set up across the state. For the protection of women, 181 'Abhayam' women helpline was made available. The department had also launched an Abhayam 181 mobile application on August 6, 2018.

Moreover, Women Security Committees were set up at the village, tehsil and district levels across the state and every district had a One Stop Crisis Centre.

Ecologists urge parties to take up human-animal conflict as poll issue

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 13: Leading environmentalists in Tamil Nadu have urged political parties to take effective measures to resolve the human-animal conflict in the state. The conflict has claimed 81 human lives since 2016, they say. The environmental activists called upon the political parties to take up this issue and include it in their election manifestos.

V. Surendra Kumar of the Coimbatore-based organisation Sraddha, while speaking to IANS, said, "Human-animal conflict is a major concern for state administrators. We don't know whether the political parties who are wielding power have any concern for this issue and if this is not taken up seriously, it is certain that more human lives and crops will be lost."

As many as 81 people lost their lives in wild elephant attacks since 2016 which is an average of 16 peo-



ple a year. Kumar elaborated, "Politicians who frequently visit Krishnagiri, Coimbatore and Nilgiris are aware of what is happening, but without an initiative nothing will happen and it is high time that preventive measures are taken."

The Tamil Nadu Agriculture department also attributed the heavy losses to crops to attacks by wild animals including wild boars, pigs

and even elephants which reach the human settlements bordering forest areas in herds. Shanmugasundaram, Deputy Director, Tamil Nadu Agriculture department, while speaking to IANS, said, "Indeed there are heavy crop losses through wild animal attacks. Mostly the issues are settled through crop insurances but there are instances where this hap-

pens late. The government has formulated several policies and we are trying to make the settlement process quick and convenient. However, farmers must also not encroach on forest land for cultivation and in certain cases it is such encroachment in the habitat of elephants that leads to attacks."

With loss of lives and crops becoming a regular phenomenon, agriculturists and environmentalists are jointly of the opinion that a concrete policy must be there to put an end to such losses.

R Veerapandyan, President, Nilgiris District Farmers Association, said: "The government must take pro-active measures to bring to an end these conflicts. This has to be taken as a priority or we may have to take to the streets. We have already petitioned all the major political parties to make this a top priority matter in their election manifestos."



Implementing ancient TN electoral system will be a major reform

The present system of electing people's representatives is not a foreign import but was practiced in 920 AD as per the inscriptions in a temple in Uthiramerur in Kancheepuram

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 13: Implementing the ancient Tamil Nadu system of electing people's representatives will be a major electoral reform that would clean up the existing system, is the general view of the people who visit Uthiramerur and see the stone inscriptions.

The present system of electing people's representatives is not a foreign import but was practiced even way back in 920 AD as per the inscriptions in a temple in Uthiramerur in Kancheepuram district about 90 km from here.

"Electoral systems in ancient times can be seen in temple stone inscriptions in Uthiramerur, Madurai and other regions," Archaeologist G. Thirumoorthy told IANS. Not only electing their representatives, people then had the right to recall their elected representatives, state the stone inscriptions.

It is election time in four Indian states and one Union Territory viz Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while laying the foundation stone for the new Parliament building in



December 2020 pointing Uthiramerur said, "There are inscriptions on stones in Tamil language about the Panchayat system prevalent during the Chola Empire in the 10th century."

"It explains how every village was categorized as Kudumbu, which

we call the ward today. One representative from these kudumbus was sent to the General Assembly, as it happens today. The General Assembly, which used to take place in this village thousands of years ago, is still there," Modi said. He also said the stone inscrip-

tions also mention the disqualification norms for the candidate who contests in the election.

"And, the rule was that the public representative or his close relatives would not be able to contest the elections if he fails to furnish the details of his property," the Prime Minister said. In those days, the village assembly drafted and finalised election rules and also guidelines on the public servant's personal and social life. There were committees/boards to look after irrigation tanks, roads and other subjects.

As per the rules, the village was divided into 30 wards with one representative elected from each ward. The qualification prescribed for contestants was that they should be between 35 years and 70 years of age, paid taxes on farm land and had homes built on a legally owned land. A person, already a member

of a committee, was ineligible to contest for three years.

An elected member could be disqualified on the grounds of incest, bribery, illegal grabbing of someone's property and acting against the public interest, read the inscriptions. Murderers, drunkards, swindlers and those having extra marital affairs with married women were not allowed to contest.

In case of an elected member proven guilty, he, his family members and blood relatives could not contest polls for seven generations.

According to the inscriptions, the public servants were elected through the system called Kudavolai. As per the system, voters were expected to write the name of preferred candidate on a palm leaf (pannai olai in Tamil) and put that in a huge mud pot (kudam in Tamil), placed at a central place.



What is needed is a people-centric health system. Significant developments in the healthcare system can be achieved through creating awareness among the common man considering their opinion too
Soumya Swaminathan | CHIEF SCIENTIST, WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

DOCTOR TESTS +VE AFTER 2ND VAX DOSE

A doctor in Himachal Pradesh tested positive for coronavirus after 27 days of the second dose of the vaccine. The woman doctor is posted in the Regional Hospital in Solan town. She had developed the coronavirus symptoms 27 days after getting the second dose of the vaccine



of the day quote

Justice Malhotra's retirement means that the SC now has only one female judge on the Bench. As an institution, I find that this is a deeply worrying fact and must promptly receive serious introspection



D Y CHANDRACHUD | JUDGE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Don't vote for BJP. If voted to power they will give away your land to big corporates and industries and make you landless. They will hand over the country to big industrialist groups putting your livelihood at stake and in danger



RAKESH TIKAIT | BHARATIYA KISAN UNION CHIEF

Congress had ruled Assam for years and showed dreams of development. However, development works started only when Narendra Modi became prime minister in 2014



SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Criminal held post shootout

New Delhi: A criminal wanted in a murder case was arrested following a shootout with a police team in west Delhi's Bakkarwala area in the early hours of Saturday, police said. The accused, Kamal Gehlot, sustained injuries in the shootout and was shifted to a nearby hospital, they added. "A shootout took place in the early hours of Saturday between a police team and wanted criminal Kamal Gehlot in the Bakkarwala area, in which he got injured," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said.

Farmer beaten to death by cousins

Budaun: A 65-year-old farmer was beaten to death with sticks allegedly by his cousins over a land dispute at a village in Uttar Pradesh's Budaun Saturday, police said. The incident took place at 6 am when the farmer, identified as Satyaveer, had gone to give fodder to his cattle in Davtori village. Additional Superintendent of Police (rural) Siddhartha Verma said. There was an ongoing dispute over a piece of land between Satyaveer and his cousins, according to a police complaint lodged by the deceased's son.

5 held in Goa nightclub raids

Panaji: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and Goa crime branch arrested five persons for alleged possession of drugs following raids at three nightclubs in North Goa, an official said Saturday. The raids were conducted by teams from the NCB and crime branch at three nightclubs at Vagator, Ozrant Friday night, NCB zonal director Sameer Wankhede said in a release.

Customs seize gold at airport

Mangaluru: Customs officials at Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) Saturday seized gold weighing 737 gm valued at over Rs 33 lakh from a 45-year-old man who arrived by an Air India flight from Dubai. The man hails from Kasaragod in Kerala. He had tried to smuggle the gold by concealing it in his specially designed inner wear, a customs release here said. The value of the contraband was put at Rs 33,75,470.

J&K ex-MLAs call for resumption of political process



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, March 13: A group of former legislators belonging to different political parties held a meeting Saturday here, terming the situation in Jammu and Kashmir as "chaotic" and demanded early resumption of a democratic political process.

The legislators including former ministers, MLAs and MLCs affiliated with National Conference, PDP and Congress also expressed serious concern over "rampant corruption" in some of the government offices and sought intervention of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in checking the system.

Issuing a statement after the meeting held under the leadership of former National Conference MLA Qazi Jalal-ud-Din, the participants said the former legislators and political workers of Jammu and Kashmir have a constructive role in steering the erstwhile state out of the current "political impasse".

"We cannot be mute spectators to the current situation. Instead, we will be reaching out to the masses and administration in an attempt to bridge the gap between the government and the people," the state-

ment issued under the banner of the ex-legislators council said.

It said the council discussed the current political, social and economic situation prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir and was of the opinion that the current impasse on the restoration of a political process has only added to the miseries of the general masses.

It sought intervention of the Lt Governor to impress upon the Union government for resumption of political process, the statement said.

The meeting was attended by former ministers Ram Paul, Jagjivan Lal and Haji Nissar; former MLA Gul Rafiquee and ex-MLCs Kashmira Singh, Brij Mohan Sharma, B L Bhat, Depinder Kour, Iqbal Butt and Firdous Tak.

"The participants observed that a delay by the Union government in restoring the democratic political system in Jammu and Kashmir creates an adverse effect and negates the very purpose of a federal structure," the statement said.

The participants said the political leadership, be it from regional or national parties, have sacrificed and given their blood to nurture political democratic space in the trouble-torn Jammu and Kashmir.

CET likely in Sept

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Union Minister Jitendra Singh Saturday said the Common Eligibility Test (CET) for government jobs recruitment is likely to be held around September this year.

He said the National Recruitment Agency (NRA) for conducting the CET has been constituted with the approval of the Union Cabinet.

"As a major boon for the youth, particularly the government job aspirants, a Common Eligibility Test (CET) will be conducted across the country from this year to screen and shortlist candidates for recruitment to central government jobs," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

The first such test is likely to be held in the later part of 2021, probably around September or so, he told PTI here.

Deboard passengers not wearing mask 'properly': DGCA to airlines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 13: Seeking to ensure strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols by air travellers, aviation regulator DGCA Saturday asked airlines to deboard passengers who do not wear their mask "properly" despite repeated warnings.

Also, the watchdog has directed airlines to treat a passenger as "unruly" in case the person violates the protocols.

The latest directives come against the backdrop of rising number of coronavirus cases in certain parts of the country even as domestic air traffic is improving.

In a circular issued Saturday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has also directed the airport operators to ensure that the passengers wear their mask and maintain social dis-



tancing norms at all times during the air travel. The DGCA said it has been noticed that some travellers undertaking air journey do not adhere to "COVID-19 protocols", which essentially involve wearing of masks properly - not below the nose, right from entering the departing airport to exiting from the arriving airport. Observing that some passengers after entering the airport do not wear their mask

properly and maintain social distance while being in the airport, the regulator said that some passengers have been noticed not wearing their masks properly while on board the aircraft.

"On board the aircraft, in case any passenger does not adhere to wearing a mask properly even after repeated warnings, he/she should be de-boarded, if need be, before departure," the circular said.

INDIA'S FIRST



View of India's first centralised air-conditioned railway terminal, named after eminent civil engineer Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya, in Bangalore PTI PHOTO

India reviews AstraZeneca side effects after concerns in Europe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Amid concerns over dangerous side-effects of the Oxford's COVID-19 vaccine, India is evaluating all serious adverse events post-vaccination to determine the causality aspects of Covishield and Covaxin, an expert associated with the process said Saturday.

His comments came in the backdrop of some European countries suspending the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine Covishield over fears that it may be causing dangerous blood clots in some people.

India has reported 234 adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs), including 71 deaths, for both the vaccines till Friday, said Dr N K Arora, an advisor to the national AEFI committee.

Manufactured in India by the Serum Institute of India (SII), the Oxford vaccine is one of the two vaccines being used in India currently; the other being Covaxin



made by domestic company Bharat Biotech. "Till Friday, 234 AEFIs (adverse events following immunisation) (for both the vaccines) including 71 deaths have been reported. The district and state level initial investigations have found no causal relationship vaccine and these events," Arora, an advisor to the national AEFI committee, told PTI.

"The national AEFI is reviewing these cases again for a final causality assessment," he said. "No specific vaccine is being looked at. We are carrying out a detailed evaluation of

all the serious adverse events including deaths and hospitalisations following vaccination to determine the causality aspect for the both vaccines- Covishield and Covaxin. If any cause of concern emerges, it will be conveyed," Dr Arora said.

The WHO had on Friday said there was no reason to stop using the vaccine as several countries suspended the use amid concerns of blood clotting. The WHO's global advisory committee on vaccine safety is presently reviewing the reports.

Centre's panel for air quality control in NCR shuts down within 5 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: The central government's Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and its Adjoining Areas has been shut down within five months of its constitution.

The commission, which was established by the Centre October last year, has shut down due to lapsing of the ordinance under which it was set up.

Speaking to PTI, Union Environment Secretary R P Gupta said the ordinance was not introduced in Parliament within six weeks of its convention, it has lapsed and consequently, the commission also stands shut.

The ordinance never became an Act. Any ordinance has to be introduced within six weeks of convening of Parliament. It did not happen so the ordinance is lapsed, hence the commission is dissolved," Gupta said. The commission was headed by M M Kutty, former secretary to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Official sources from the ministry said they will

The commission, which was established by the Centre October last year, has shut down due to lapsing of the ordinance under which it was set up

try to introduce the ordinance in the next session of Parliament and in the meantime, the state pollution control board and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) will be the supervising authorities.

Faced with rising air pollution in Delhi-NCR, the Centre had introduced the ordinance that put in place the commission and provided for up to five years of jail term and Rs one crore fine for violators with immediate effect.

Under the ordinance released by the Ministry of Law and Justice on October 28, the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) was dissolved and replaced by the commission.

The 20-member commission was

set up under the ordinance, which was signed by the president on October 28, to ensure strict compliance. The commission had the power to lay down parameters of air quality, parameters of discharge of environmental pollutants, inspect premises violating the law, ordering closure of non-abiding industries/plants, etc.

The ordinance may be called the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance 2020. It shall apply to national capital region and also adjoining areas in so far as it relates to matters concerning air pollution in the NCR. It shall come into force at once," the ordinance had said. As per the ordinance, the areas where it was in force included Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, adjoining areas of the NCR and Delhi where any source of pollution was located.

The commission had the power to restrict any industry, operations or processes or class of industries that could have implications on air quality in the region.

'Transport connectivity can dramatically boost economies of India, B'desh'

GEOGRAPHICALLY, BANGLADESH'S LOCATION MAKES IT A STRATEGIC GATEWAY TO INDIA, NEPAL, BHUTAN, AND OTHER EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 13: Seamless transport connectivity between India and Bangladesh has the potential to increase national income by as much as 17 per cent in Bangladesh and 8 per cent in India, says a new World Bank report.

Titled Connecting to Thrive Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia, the report contends that improving transport connectivity between the two countries could increase exports even further, yielding a 297 per cent increase in Bangladesh's exports to India and a 172 per cent increase in India's exports to Bangladesh.

Previous analysis indicates that Bangladesh's exports to India could

increase by 182 per cent and India's exports to Bangladesh by 126 per cent if the countries signed a free trade agreement.

Geographically, Bangladesh's location makes it a strategic gateway to India, Nepal, Bhutan, and other East Asian countries. Bangladesh can also become an economic powerhouse by improving regional trade, transit and logistics networks, said Mercy Tembon, World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

While trade between India and Bangladesh has increased substantially over the last decade, it is estimated to be \$10 billion below its current potential, Tembon said, adding The World Bank is supporting the government of Bangladesh to strengthen regional



and trade transit through various investments in regional road and waterways corridors, priority land ports, and digital and automated systems for trade.

Today, bilateral trade accounts for only about 10 per cent of Bangladesh's trade and a mere 1

per cent of India's trade. In contrast, in East Asian and Sub-Saharan African economies, intraregional trade accounts for 50 per cent and 22 per cent of total trade, respectively.

In fact, it is about 15-20 per cent less expensive for a company in India to trade with a company in

Brazil or Germany than with a company in Bangladesh, the report points out. High tariffs, para-tariffs, and non-tariff barriers also serve as major trade barriers. Simple average tariffs in Bangladesh and India are more than twice the world average, the World Bank report said.

The report analyses the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA); compares it with international best practices; and identifies its strengths as well as gaps for seamless regional connectivity.

The report also discusses regional policy actions the countries can take to strengthen the MVA and proposes priorities for infrastructure investments that will help the countries maximize its bene-

fits. Weak transport integration makes the border between Bangladesh and India thick. Crossing the India-Bangladesh border at Petrapole-Benapole, the most important border post between the two countries, takes several days.

In contrast, the time to cross borders handling similar volumes of traffic in other regions of the world, including East Africa, is less than six hours, the report highlights.

The eastern sub-region is poised to become an economic growth pole for South Asia. An important component of this development potential is for countries to invest in connectivity - rail, inland waterways, and roads, said Junaid Ahmad, World Bank Country Director in India.

of the day quote

Sustained economic growth is key to India's future. Investment and sustained economic growth are critical for security reasons



AMITABH KANT | NITI AAYOG CEO

India's border with Bangladesh that West Bengal shares is the most unsafe in the country. The Centre has been able to bring peace in Kashmir and other disturbed areas but the eastern borders have turned into a transit point for terror elements to infiltrate into the country to create unrest



DILIP GHOSH | WEST BENGAL BJP CHIEF

Belgaum is part of India and the Maharashtra-Karnataka dispute is a language dispute. It shouldn't be stretched too far and this is the responsibility of the Karnataka government too



SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Shatabdi bogie catches fire

Dehradun: One bogie of Dehradun-bound Shatabdi Express caught fire Saturday but no casualty was reported, police said. The train's bogie caught fire near Kasro railway station when it was coming from Delhi, Uttarakhand police chief Ashok Kumar said, adding no one, however, was killed or injured in the incident. Kumar said all passengers were evacuated from the affected coach which was separated from the train. Railway officials in New Delhi said the fire broke out in coach C5 of the train due to a short circuit.

Seven Hizbul terrorists held

Srinagar: Police Saturday said they have arrested seven overground workers (OGWs) of terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen from Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir. "Shopian Police arrested seven terrorist associates linked with proscribed terrorist outfit HM," the police said in a tweet. They said incriminating materials were seized from the possession of the arrested persons. A case has been registered and a probe is on.

Punjab shuts all anganwadi centres

Chandigarh: Punjab Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister Aruna Chaudhary Saturday instructed all anganwadi centres in the state to be shut till further orders due to resurgence in Covid-19 cases. She termed the decision as a necessary safety measure required for children amid the sudden spike in cases. She said ration and other materials for children and other beneficiaries will continue to be distributed from door to door through anganwadi workers and helpers so that nutritional support to the beneficiaries would not be affected due to the shutdown.

Five of family commit suicide

Patna: A small-time Bihar coal trader and his family committed suicide in Supaul district, an official said Saturday. The deceased, identified as Mishrilal Shah, his wife and three children were found hanging in one room on Friday night. The incident spread a shock wave across the village. The incident took place in Gaddi Chowk village under Raghupur police station.



We may have political differences. We oppose each other. But at the same time, when the country is concerned, we should not do anything or say anything which will damage the country's image which our enemies will use and say this has been said in the Indian parliament

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | RAJYA SABHA CHAIRMAN

IAF AIRLIFTS 381 STRANDED PASSENGERS

The Indian Air Force Saturday airlifted 381 stranded people from Jammu and Kashmir to Ladakh. While 197 passengers were airlifted from Srinagar to Leh in C-17 aircraft, another batch of 184 passengers were ferried from Jammu to Leh



Assam: G-23 leaders not in Cong list of campaigners

The list missed out the names of former Rajya Sabha member Ghulam Nabi Azad, senior party leader Kapil Sibal, Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari and Rajya Sabha MP Anand Sharma



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: The Congress released the list of its star campaigners for the three-phase Assam Assembly elections which included party chief Sonia Gandhi, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former party President Rahul Gandhi, his sis-

ter and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and several others.

Like West Bengal, the list missed out the names of former Rajya Sabha member Ghulam Nabi Azad, senior party leader Kapil Sibal, Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari and Rajya Sabha MP Anand Sharma, who are part of the G-23 signatories.

The other star campaigners are Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Sachin Pilot, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Mukul Wasnik, Salman Khurshid, Jitendra Singh, Vikas Upadhyay, Anirudh Singh, cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, Mohan Prakash, Nabam Tuki, Mukul Sangma.

The party has also named Rameshwar Oraon, Assam Congress chief Ripun Bora, Sushmita Dev, Gourav Gogoi, Debabarta Saikia, Pradyut Bordoloi, Rakibul Hussain, Bhupen Bora, Rana Goswami, Rane Narah, Rupjyoti Kurmi, Roselina Tirkey and Pradip Nag.

Priyanka Gandhi had last week gone to Assam on a two-day visit and addressed a few public rallies and also met Assam tea garden workers.

She is again scheduled to visit the state in the coming days. Her brother Rahul Gandhi, who went to Tamil Nadu and Kerala earlier, will also visit Assam in the coming days.

The Congress, which ruled the state for 15 years before losing power in 2016 to the BJP, is hoping for a comeback on the back of a multi-party alliance.

The Congress has formed a Grand Alliance in Assam consisting of the AIUDEF, Bodoland People's Front, CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML), the Anchalik Gana Morcha and the Rashtriya Janata Dal.

It was formed to fight the upcoming election for the 126-member assembly against the BJP-led NDA.

Polling will take place in three phases - March 27, April 1 and April 6. Counting of votes will be taken up May 2.

Former Union minister Yashwant Sinha joins TMC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 13: Former Union minister Yashwant Sinha, a bitter critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi regime, Saturday joined Trinamool Congress days ahead of the high-octane West Bengal assembly polls.

Sinha, a senior BJP leader during Atal Bihari Vajpayee rule, told reporters it was call of the hour to ensure TMC win the assembly elections with a thumping majority which will herald defeat of Modi government in 2024 Lok Sabha polls and save the country.

The bureaucrat-turned-politician said attack on Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram which she told him during their 45-minute conversation was the tipping point for his joining her party.

"The tipping point was the attack (in Nandigram) on Mamata Banerjee. When I spoke to her today, she described the incident to me," he said.

"This government can do anything to win the election. The attack on Mamata Ji made me decide that I want to work with her," the former union minister said about the March 10 incident.

After staying in a state-run hospital in Kolkata for two days, the doctors to go home Friday evening.

Sinha, who served in the cabinet of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had quit the saffron party in 2018 after having serious differences with the present party leadership.

His son Jayant Sinha is the BJP MP from Hazaribagh in Jharkhand.

The octogenarian leader had campaigned for TMC in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Speaking after joining TMC at its office in Kolkata, the bureaucrat-turned-politician, made a scathing attack on Modi and Union Home minister Amit Shah, observing that democracy is under threat in the country under them.

6 COVID-19 vaccines in offing in India: Vardhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, March 13: Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan Saturday announced that more than six coronavirus vaccines will come up in India.

He also said that 1.84 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to people so far, while 23 crore tests have been conducted.

India has developed two vaccines, which have been given to 71 countries. Many more nations are seeking the vaccines, and these are not little-known nations...Canada, Brazil and other developed countries are using Indian vaccines with a great zeal, he said. More than half a dozen vaccines are going to come up, he said. Till Saturday morning, 1.84 crore vaccine shots have been given in the country and 20 lakh people were inoculated yesterday, the minister added.

He was speaking while inaugurating the new green campus of the National Institute of Research in Environmental Health near here.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to create a new India to turn it into a 'vishwa guru' (world leader), he added. Respect science. There is a need to end politics over it (vaccine) given that it is a scientific fight not a political one. That is why we should work unitedly, Vardhan said. The efforts of our scientists are praiseworthy as due to their labour we have achieved all this. Year 2020, apart from being a



COVID-19 year, will be remembered as the year of science and scientists, he added.

He said that initially there was only one laboratory in India for COVID-19 testing. But we have 2,412 testing facilities now, he added.

We were the first in the world to isolate the coronavirus. We isolated its mutation. And our scientists helped the ICMR in vaccine. People have praised it (vaccine). Some people tried to create confusion, but truth is unbeatable, he said.

Talking about the rising infection cases, the minister said this disturbing trend was due to the carelessness and misunderstanding.

People think that as the vaccine has come and all is well now, he said, while urging them to follow the COVID-19 rules for protection against the virus.

Amarnath yatra to start June 28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, March 13: The annual 56-day Amarnath yatra will commence June 28 with all COVID-19 protocols in place, and culminate, as per the tradition, on the day of Raksha Bandhan festival August 22, officials said Saturday.

They said the registration process for the pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre high Himalayan cave shrine in south Kashmir would begin April 1 through 446 designated branches of Punjab National Bank, Jammu and Kashmir Bank and YES bank in 37 states and Union Territories.

A decision to this effect was taken at the 40th board meeting of the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) chaired by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhavan here, the officials said.

Last year, the yatra was restricted to a group of Sadhus due to coronavirus pandemic, while in 2019 it was called off mid-way due to a "terror threat" August 2, three days before the Centre revoked provisions of Article 370 and divided the state in to two union territories.

In 2019, over 3.42 lakh pilgrims visited the Hindu cave shrine, housing the naturally formed ice-shivlinga, while the highest number of over 3.52 lakh pilgrims paid their obeisance at the shrine in 2015.

As many as 3.20 lakh offered their prayers at the shrine in 2016, 2.60 lakh in 2017 and 2.85 lakh in 2018, the officials said.

WASTED EFFORTS



Farmers inspect their damaged wheat crop following unseasonal rainfall and hailstorm, in the outskirts of Bhopal, Saturday

Kerala min regrets party stand on Sabarimala

STATE DEVASOM MINISTER KADAKAMPALLY SURENDRAN EXTENDED AN OPEN APOLOGY FOR THE WAY THINGS WENT OUT OF HAND IN THE TEMPLE TOWN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, March 13: A day after CPI-M candidates hit the campaign trail, the first feedback that they seem to have got was the wrong stand that the Pinarayi Vijayan government took with regards to the famed Sabarimala temple. This was evident when state Devasom Minister Kadakampally Surendran extended an open apology for the way things went out of hand in the temple town.

Kerala goes to the polls to elect 140 assembly legislators April 6.

Social media is flooded with the speeches of top CPI-M leaders including Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and numerous other top brass, when they took a positive stand on the entry of women aged



between 10 and 50 to the famed Sabarimala temple, as suggested by the apex court a few years ago. Incidentally it was Vijayan who led

from the front and even went to the extent of heralding a renaissance movement, soon after the apex court ruled the entry of all women to the

Sabarimala temple in 2018.

What then followed was a never seen strong protests and a 'battle' between the believers and the police.

At one point of time two women in the hitherto banned age group was able to get a darshan at the famed temple, with a strong police force accompanying them.

Even though at the moment the case has been referred to a seven-member bench of the Supreme Court, Surendran, in an open admission, altered the earlier position and Thursday said looking back on what happened, all of them are deeply sad.

"We have made it very clear that whatever is going to be the apex court verdict, we will go forward only after taking into the views and opinion of all concerned into confi-

dence," said Surendran.

It was the Congress party which fired the first salvo, when last week the party leadership said if elected to power, Kerala will bring legislation on women's entry to Sabarimala temple.

Not to be outdone, CM Vijayan announced all not-so-serious cases registered against the protesting believers, then will be cancelled and it was done last week.

Reacting to the Devasom Minister's regret, state BJP president K Surendran Thursday said even if the state minister takes a thousand holy dips in the Ganga, his wrong position taken then cannot be cleaned away.

"I am sure all of you will remember the statements made by their top brass including Vijayan and

the State Devasom Minister that for a few votes, they will not change their stand. And see now the hypocrisy of the CPI-M. It was after he took over as Devasom Minister, he was out to destroy the temple culture and systems that were there.

See, now what they are saying, they are sad it seems," lashed out Surendran. The CPI-M which was routed in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when they managed to win just one of the 20 seats. The general perception was that it happened because of their wrong stand in the Sabarimala issue.

In the days ahead, it's clear that both the BJP and the Congress will go hammer and tongs against Vijayan on this issue, as the first statement on this came from none other than the Devasom Minister.

international



As we continue to make progress against the virus, I want to thank people for the sacrifices they continue to make, and hope they can look forward to being reunited with loved ones as restrictions are cautiously eased

BORIS JOHNSON | PRIME MINISTER, UK

SRI LANKA TO BAN BURQA

Sri Lanka will ban the wearing of the burqa and shut over thousand Islamic schools, a government minister has said. Minister for public security Sarath Weerasekera said he had signed a paper for cabinet approval to ban the full face covering worn by some Muslim women on "national security" grounds



of the day quote

When we tested the new strains against vaccine-induced neutralising antibodies, we found that the three new strains first described in South Africa were 20-40 times more resistant to neutralisation

ALEJANDRO BALAZS | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE, MGH

Due to the multiple, credible sexual harassment and misconduct allegations, it is clear that Governor Cuomo has lost the confidence of his governing partners and the people of New York. He should resign

CHUCK SCHUMER | MAJORITY LEADER, US SENATE

Beijing's decision to impose radical changes to restrict participation in Hong Kong's electoral system is part of a pattern designed to harass and stifle all voices critical of China's policies. The moves amount to the third breach of the Joint Declaration in less than nine months

DOMINIC RAAB | FOREIGN SECRETARY, UK

SHORT TAKES

Jordan Health Min steps down

Salt (Jordan): Jordan's health minister stepped down Saturday after at least six patients in a hospital Covid-19 patient ward died due to a shortage of oxygen supplies, state media reported. Jordanian Prime Minister Bisher al-Khasasneh ordered an investigation into the deaths early Saturday morning at a government hospital in the town of Salt, 20 km north of the capital Amman. He asked Health Minister Nathir Obeidat to resign, according to the reports.

Four arrested for possessing uranium

Kathmandu: Four Nepalese nationals were arrested here Saturday for possessing 2.5 kilogrammes of unprocessed uranium, with one of them claiming that her father-in-law "brought" it from India where he worked in a uranium mine some 20 years ago, police said. According to Senior Superintendent Sushil Singh Rathour, spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police Office, Ranipokhari, the arrest was made on a tip-off.

Bomb kills eight; UN slams deaths

Kabul: A powerful car bomb killed at least eight people and wounded 47 in Afghanistan's western Herat province, officials said Saturday. Hours later, the UN condemned an "alarming" increase in attacks in the country targeting civilians. The death toll in the explosion late Friday that also destroyed 14 houses is expected to rise because several of the injured were critical, said Rafiq Sherzai, a spokesman for the provincial hospital.

Ethiopia denies 'ethnic cleansing'

Kampala: The Ethiopian government is disputing charges of ethnic cleansing in the Tigray conflict, calling allegations by the United States "unfounded." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said "nothing during or after the end of the main law enforcement operation in Tigray can be identified or defined by any standards as a targeted, intentional ethnic cleansing against anyone in the region. That is why the Ethiopian government vehemently opposes such accusations."

Floyd family agrees to \$27mn settlement amidst ex-cop's trial



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Minneapolis, March 13: The city of Minneapolis on Friday agreed to pay \$27 million to settle a civil lawsuit from George Floyd's family over the Black man's death in police custody, as jury selection continued in a former officer's murder trial. Council members met privately to discuss the settlement, then returned to public session for a unanimous vote in support of the massive payout. It easily surpassed the \$20 million the city approved two years ago to the family of a white woman killed by a police officer.

Floyd family attorney Ben Crump called it the largest pre-trial settlement ever for a civil rights claim, and thanked city leaders for "showing you care about George Floyd." "It's going to be a long journey to justice. This is just one step on the journey to justice," Crump said. "This makes a statement that George Floyd deserved better than what we witnessed May 25, 2020, that George Floyd's life mattered, and that by extension, Black lives matter." "Even though my brother is not here, he's here with me in my heart," Philonise Floyd said. "If I could get him back, I would give all this back." L. Chris Stewart, another attorney who worked with the fam-

Floyd's family attorney Ben Crump called it the largest pre-trial settlement ever for a civil rights claim, and thanked city leaders for showing care about George Floyd

ily, said the size of the settlement "changes evaluations and civil rights for a Black person when they die."

"And what happens is that trickles down to decisions in the communities across this country. When there is a city council or a mayor deciding, 'Oh, should we get rid of no-knock warrants, should we get rid of chokeholds, do we want to change these policies?' They have 27 million reasons now why they should. And that will make decisions happen. That will make accountability happen."

The settlement includes \$500,000 for the south Minneapolis neighborhood that includes the 38th and Chicago intersection that has been blocked by barricades since his death, with a massive metal sculpture and murals in his honor. The city didn't immediately say how that money would be spent.

Police detain 150 participants in Russian Opposition forum

AGENCIES

Moscow, March 13: Russian police Saturday detained about 150 participants of a forum of independent members of municipal councils, an action that comes amid the authorities' multi-pronged crackdown on dissent.

Police showed up at the gathering in Moscow shortly after it opened, saying that all those present will be detained for taking part in an event organised by an "undesirable" organisation.

A police officer leading the raid said the detainees will be taken down to police precincts and charged with administrative violations.

OVD-Info, an independent group monitoring arrests and political repression, said that more than 150 participants in the forum were detained.

Among them were Ilya Yashin, an opposition politician who leads one of Moscow's municipal districts; former mayor of Yekaterinburg Yevgeny Roizman; and Moscow's municipal council member Yulia Galyamina.



"Their goal was to scare people away from engaging in politics," Andrei Pivovarov, a politician who helped organize the forum, said in a video from a police van.

Pivovarov has played a leading role in Open Russia, a group funded by self-exiled Russian tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Khodorkovsky moved to London after spending 10 years in prison in Russia on charges widely seen as political revenge for challenging President Vladimir Putin's rule.

COLOURS OF CHANGE



Participants dressed in fancy costumes take part in a performance as students and teachers of a local school celebrate Maslennitsa, also known as Pancake Week, which is a pagan holiday marking the end of winter, in central Moscow, Russia

US to reconsider objections to H-1B visas during Trump regime

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, March 13: The Biden administration has said it is willing to reconsider the objections or adverse decisions to foreign workers on visas like H-1B, the most sought after among Indian IT professionals, due to the three policy memos by the previous Trump regime which now have been rescinded.

The move is expected to come to the rescue of a large number of Indian IT professionals who were having a tough time during the previous Trump administration due to various policies and memorandums on non-immigrant work visas, in particular the H-1B.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in spe-



cially occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on Friday announced "it may reopen and/or reconsider adverse decisions" on Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, made based on three rescinded policy memos.

The USCIS said it will generally use its discretion to accept a motion to reopen filed more than 30 days after the decision, if filed before the end of the validity period requested on the petition or labour condition application, whichever is earlier; and the decision was based on one or more policies in the three rescinded H-1B memoranda.

On June 17, 2020, the USCIS issued Policy Memorandum 602-0114, which officially rescinded two prior policy memoranda. First titled "Determining Employer-Employee Relationship for Adjudication of H-1B Petitions, Including Third-Party Site Placements," that was issued on January 8, 2010; and second "Contracts and Itineraries Requirements for H-1B Petitions Involving Third-Party Worksites," issued on February 22, 2018.

WHO discourages Covid-19 vaccine export bans: Officials

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Geneva, March 13: Following reports of Covid-19 vaccines being restricted for export, World Health Organization (WHO) officials have expressed their disapproval against the practice.

"The WHO is always very concerned about export bans on products that will help to end the acute phase of this pandemic," Mariangela Simao, WHO Assistant-Director General for Access to Medicines and Health Products, said at a virtual press conference Friday.

"So the WHO very much discourages the use of this type of measure," she continued.

In a newsletter Tuesday, European Council President Charles Michel said: "The UK and the US have imposed an outright ban on the export



The WHO is always very concerned about export bans on products that will help to end the acute phase of this pandemic. So it very much discourages the use of this type of measure

MARIANGELA SIMAO | WHO ASSISTANT-DG FOR ACCESS TO MEDICINES AND HEALTH PRODUCTS

of vaccines or vaccine components produced on their territory." Both countries have denied the accusations, Xinhua news agency reported.

Asked about whether vaccines should be stockpiled at Friday's press conference, Bruce Aylward, Senior Advisor on Organizational Change to the WHO Director-General, also advised against the practice.

MYANMAR TURMOIL

4 killed as forces continue crackdown on protesters

AGENCIES

Mandalay, March 13: Security forces in Myanmar Saturday again met protests against last month's military takeover with lethal force, killing at least four people by shooting live ammunition at demonstrators.

Three deaths were reported in Mandalay, the country's second-biggest city, and one in Pyay, a town in south-central Myanmar. There were multiple reports on social media of the deaths, along with photos of dead and wounded people in both locations.

The independent UN human rights expert for Myanmar, Tom Andrews, said Thursday that "credible reports" indicated security forces in the Southeast Asian nation had so far killed at least 70 people, and cited growing evidence of crimes against humanity since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Reports on social media also said three people were shot dead



Friday night in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, where residents for the past week have been defying an 8 p.m. curfew to come out on the streets.

Two deaths by gunfire were reported in Yangon's Thaketa township, where a protest being held outside a police station was dispersed. A crowd had gathered there to demand the release of three young men who were seized from their home earlier Friday night. Photos said to be of the bodies of two dead protesters were posted online. The other reported fatality Friday night was of a 19-year-old man shot in Hlaing township.

Tesla investor sues Elon Musk over 'erratic tweets'

AGENCIES

New York, March 13: Tesla Inc Chief Executive Elon Musk has been sued by a shareholder who accused him of violating his 2018 settlement with the US Securities and Exchange Commission over his Twitter use.

According to a complaint unsealed late Thursday in Delaware Chancery Court, which also names the electric car company's board as defendants, Musk's "erratic" tweets and the failure of Tesla directors to ensure he complied with the SEC settlement have exposed shareholders to billions of dollars of losses.



The complaint highlighted several Musk posts on social media platform Twitter, including his assessment last May 1 that Tesla's stock price was "too high," prompting a more than \$13 billion tumble in Tesla's market value.

Chase Gharrity, the plaintiff, said Musk's actions and the directors' inaction have caused "substantial financial harm," and that they should pay damages to Palo Alto, California-based Tesla for breaching their fiduciary duties.

The lawsuit was filed even though Tesla's share price has soared nearly fivefold since Musk's "too high" tweet, giving Tesla a valuation well above \$600 billion, and the SEC has not publicly accused Musk of recent violations.

"It could pressure the SEC into taking some sort of recourse," said Charles Elson, a University of Delaware professor and corporate governance specialist.

Tesla did not immediately respond on Friday to requests for comment. Gharrity's lawyers, Musk's lawyers in the SEC case, and the SEC did not immediately respond to similar requests.

Covid vax linked to 30% reduction in transmission: Study

PATH TO RECOVERY

The research involved 30,000 NHS staff between December 2020 and March 2021, studying both those who had and had not been vaccinated

The latest study came as the UK government said it will discuss with the EU countries about the possibility of creating a vaccine passport

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has confirmed that the government is "on course" to offering a first vaccine dose to all adults by the end of July

On February 22, PM Boris Johnson announced his long-anticipated "roadmap" exiting the lockdown

AGENCIES

London, March 13: A UK-based study has revealed that the rate of infection with Covid-19 for people that live with Scotland's healthcare workers is at least 30 per cent lower than the worker has been vaccinated mostly with a single dose.

Since household members of healthcare workers can also be infected via other people, this 30 per cent relative risk reduction is an underestimate of the "true" effect of vaccination on transmission, according to the research by the Public Health Scotland and the University of Glasgow published Friday.

The research involved 30,000 National Health Service (NHS) staff between December 8, 2020 and March 3, 2021, studying both those who had and had not been vaccinated.



Meanwhile, where healthcare workers had received a second dose of the vaccine at least 14 days before, their household members had a rate of Covid-19 which was at least 54 per cent lower than household members where healthcare workers had not been vaccinated, said the study.

The latest study came as the UK government said it will discuss with the European Union countries about the possibility of creating a vaccine passport, which will allow those who have had the jab to travel abroad more freely.

More than 23 million people in Britain have been given the first

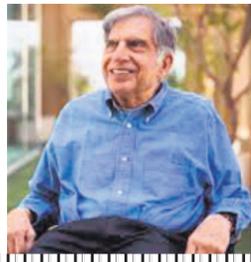
business



The country requires growth at this juncture, even with economic tradeoffs, as it aspires to increase its dominance and self-reliance in the global economy.
KRISHNAMURTHY SUBRAMANIAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

TATA GETS FIRST SHOT

Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata Saturday hoped everyone can be immunised and protected soon from the coronavirus pandemic, having got himself vaccinated. He in a social media post praised the process of vaccination, describing it as "effortless and painless"



of the day quote

Economies of both east and Southeast Asia have transformed themselves within one generation. Also, India has witnessed a substantial transformation over 30 years since 1991 with an average growth of 6.5% per annum
AMITABH KANT | CEO, NITI AAYOG



I have invited Jeff Bezos to testify in the Budget Committee next week to explain to the American people why he thinks it's appropriate for him to spend a whole lot of money denying economic dignity to workers at Amazon, while he has become \$78 billion richer during the pandemic
BERNIE SANDERS | US SENATOR



To create employability and employment opportunities, there is a need to focus on new age skills and step up the momentum of skilling
MAHENDRA NATH PANDEY | UNION MINISTER FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT



SHORT TAKES

China denies \$1 billion fine

Beijing: China denied on Friday it was planning to hit e-commerce giant Alibaba with a record fine of almost \$1 billion for allegedly flouting monopoly rules, as authorities turned up the pressure on the country's vast technology sector. Alibaba, China's largest online shopping portal, has been in the crosshairs of authorities in recent months over concerns of its reach into the daily finances of ordinary Chinese people. The market's regulator denied it was planning to fine the company almost \$1 billion for anti-competitive behaviour.

IOC helps bolster India's vax drive

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's top oil firm, has helped bolster India's COVID-19 vaccination programme by supplementing the available cold chain equipment (CCE) infrastructure in four states for the storage and transportation of vaccines. It has supplemented cold chain requirements across Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Manipur, a company statement said.

'Government to promote energy'

New Delhi: The government is committed to promote renewable energy resources in the country, especially in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector, Union minister Nitin Gadkari has said. He also exuded confidence that within five years, India will be a top manufacturing hub for automobiles in the world. Gadkari, who holds MSME portfolio along with road transport, said by making solar energy available, "we will create big market for electric vehicles".

Mishra becomes ICRIER director

New Delhi: Deepak Mishra, practice manager in the World Bank's (WB) macroeconomics, trade, and investment global practice has been appointed as the next director and CEO of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, the economic think tank said Saturday. He will take over from Rajat Kathuria who has been the director & CEO of ICRIER since September 1, 2012.

Draft e-Comm policy seeks equal treatment of sellers

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 13: India will require e-commerce firms to treat sellers equally on their platforms and ensure transparency, according to a draft policy seen by Reuters Saturday that follows criticism against business practices of big online companies.

India has been deliberating a new e-commerce policy for months amid complaints from brick-and-mortar retailers who allege online giants like Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart flout federal regulations. The companies have denied the allegations.

A Reuters special report last month revealed that Amazon has for



India has been deliberating a new e-commerce policy for months amid complaints from brick-and-mortar retailers who allege online giants like Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart flout federal regulations

years given preferential treatment to a small group of sellers on its India platform and used them to circumvent the country's foreign investment rules.

The latest draft of the policy doc-

ument says operators should be impartial in their dealings with sellers. "E-commerce operators must ensure equal treatment of all sellers/vendors registered on their platforms and not adopt algorithms

which result in prioritizing select vendors/sellers," it says.

A spokesman for the commerce ministry declined to comment.

The policy will apply to Amazon and Flipkart - two top e-commerce

players in India - as well as domestic players like Reliance Industries, which has plans to expand its JioMart online platform. All three firms did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Separately, India is also considering changes to foreign investment rules that could prompt players including Amazon to restructure their ties with some major sellers, Reuters reported in January.

Government officials are set to hold talks next week with industry executives on such rules, according to people with direct knowledge.

Top government officials from various departments, including the commerce ministry, Saturday met to discuss the e-commerce policy.

Indian economy looking at 'V-shaped' recovery: Thakur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: There are green shoots visible in various sectors of the economy and the country is already looking at a 'V-shaped' recovery, Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur said Saturday.

"India is already looking at 'V-shaped' recovery. Along with the green shoots in various sectors, in the month of February, FPI inflows were ₹25,787 crore," Thakur said at a virtual conclave organised by the Institute of Actuaries of India.

After two consecutive quarters of contraction, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) entered into a positive territory with a growth of 0.4 per cent in the October-December quarter of the current fiscal, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in February.

Thakur said the country's foreign exchange reserves, which have been steadily increasing over the last few months, had touched all time high at USD 590 billion in January 2021.

Economy seen consolidating in March '21: PHD Chamber

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: Economic activity is expected to consolidate in March 2021 as the Covid-19 impacted difficult financial year 2020-21 is winding down with new hopes for the next financial year with a great growth trajectory of Indian economy, said Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry Saturday.

Out of the 10 indicators of QET (Quick Economic Trends) of economic and business activity tracked by the industry body PHDCCI, 7 have performed positive in February 2021 of which passenger vehicle sales has shown the highest growth of 18% over the corresponding month in the previous year.

Though COVID-19 cases are re-emerging in some states including Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, the movement of the Indian economy remains steady in February 2021.

We are happy to note that the vaccination drive in the country is moving at a faster rate, with more than 2.6 crore vaccines being administered so far, said Aggarwal.

Positive GDP growth to the level of 0.4% in Q3 FY 2020-21 and a steady improvement in lead economic and business indicators would go a long way to strengthen



Positive GDP growth to the level of 0.4% in Q3 FY 2020-21 and a steady improvement in lead economic and business indicators would go a long way to strengthen economic growth in the coming quarters with the enhanced level of confidence of businesses

SANJAY AGGARWAL, PRESIDENT, PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

economic growth in the coming quarters with the enhanced level of confidence of businesses, he said.

Ten economic and business indicators of QET include demand and supply indicators along with ex-

ternal and financial sectors indicators, according to PHDCCI.

Economic and business indicators such as GST Collections, E-way Bills, Railway freight, Passenger Vehicle Sales, Stock Market and Exports have shown a positive y-o-y growth in February 2021 as compared with February 2020, while the Exchange Rate has shown positive sequential growth in February 2021 as compared with January 2021.

At this juncture, to continue the pace of economic momentum, rapid administration of COVID-19 vaccination, especially in the States where COVID-19 cases are re-emerging, becomes crucial, said Aggarwal.

Further, immediate policy attention is required towards credit access to industry. bursement

Bitcoin hits \$60K for first time ever

REUTERS

Paris, March 13: Bitcoin briefly rose above \$60,000 for the first time Saturday, as increasing backing from corporate heavyweights helps the world's most popular virtual currency continue its record-breaking run. The cryptocurrency hit an all-time high of \$60,012 at 11:49 GMT, according to the website CoinMarketCap.

Bitcoin has been on a meteoric rise since March last year, when it stood at \$5,000, spurred by online payments giant PayPal saying it would allow account holders to use cryptocurrency.

Last month Elon Musk's electric carmaker Tesla invested \$1.5 billion in the virtual unit, while Twitter chief Jack Dorsey and rap mogul Jay-Z said they are creating a fund aimed at making Bitcoin "the internet's currency".

Others jumping on the bandwagon include Wall Street player BNY Mellon, investment fund giant BlackRock and credit card titan Mastercard. Bitcoin, which was launched back in 2009, hit the headlines in 2017 after soaring from less than \$1,000 in January to almost \$20,000 in December of the same year.

The virtual bubble then burst in subsequent days, with bitcoin's value then fluctuating wildly before sinking below \$5,000 by October



ON THE RISE

The cryptocurrency hit an all-time high of \$60,012 at 11:49 GMT, according to the website CoinMarketCap

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2018. However the last year's rise has been more steady, with investors and Wall Street finance giants wooed by dizzying growth, the opportunity for profit and asset diversification, and a safe store of value to guard against inflation.

Bitcoins are traded via a decentralised registry system known as a blockchain.

MPTB highlights tourism growth at Int'l Travel Exhibition

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB) Friday participated in the India International Travel Exhibition (ITE) to showcase their fast growing tourism, held at a city hotel. The exhibition will continue till March 14.

Deputy Director (Events & Marketing) MPTB Yuvraj Padole said "We have a clear vision for the State, with various activities planned to make Madhya Pradesh a tourist friendly destination.

Madhya Pradesh has a lot to offer in terms of tourist attractions. We have played an active role in shaping the tourism sector in India. Participation in these Travel and Tourism fair will give MP tourism a platform to showcase its beauty and versatility."

Madhya Pradesh is a versatile State having variety of tourism products to attract tourists.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launches first store

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest gold and diamond retail chains in the country, Saturday launched its first store at Rupali Square, Saheed Nagar in the city.

The store was inaugurated by Odia film actor Sabyasachi Mishra in the presence of MP Ahamed (Malabar Group Chairman), PA Ibrahim Haji (Co-chairman Malabar Group), O Asher (Managing Director-Indian Operations Malabar Gold & Diamonds), Shamlal Ahamed (Managing Director - International Operations Malabar Gold & Diamonds), Abdul Salam KP (Group Executive Director- Malabar Group), PK Siraj (National Retail Head, Malabar Group) and other senior management officials.



The Bhubaneswar store will display a remarkable range of bridal jewellery, traditional, daily wear in gold, diamond and platinum along with hand-picked designs from the company's popular sub-brands like mine for diamond jewellery, Era for uncut diamond jewellery, divine for Indian heritage

jewellery, Ethnix handcrafted jewellery collection, Precia precious gemstone jewellery, Zoul lifestyle jewellery and Starlet for kids jewellery.

There is a special offer on wedding purchases wherein customer can book jewellery by paying minimum 10% in advance and get jewellery at the booked rate or pre-

vailing rate whichever is lower.

"The store in Bhubaneswar will help us further expand our presence in eastern India. The store launch will bring an element of novelty to our main foray into Odisha. Our retail expansion is a part of our plan to become the number one gold retail brand in the world in terms of both showroom count and sales. So, we have plans to triple the number of showrooms in the next five years", said Malabar Group Chairman MP Ahamed.

"Our unparalleled transparency in pricing and quality has helped us win customer confidence across the country and beyond. We want to offer our unique services, facilities and unmatched variety to the customers in Odisha", said O Asher, Managing Director, India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

'78% students trained by EDII are successful entrepreneurs'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad, an acknowledged national resource Institute in Entrepreneurship Education, Research, Training and Institution Building, has trained 1,730 students till now to pursue an entrepreneurial career.

During a press conference, Friday, Subrata Kumar Biswal, Head of EDII Bhubaneswar Regional Office, said, "EDII has trained 1,730 students so far from 1993. It is heartening to mention that 78% of these students have become successful entrepreneurs and social change leaders. The remaining alumni are ei-

ther pursuing a career in the corporate sector/academics or pursuing further studies."

About 200 aspirants have been trained from this institute and are now successful entrepreneurs.

EDII offers flagship programmes Post Graduate Diploma in Management- Entrepreneurship (PGDM-E) & PGDM in Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Venture Development (IEV) for 2 year.

Biswal said, "EDII has been at the forefront of encouraging and promoting entrepreneurship as a viable career and profession since decades. Hence, it is such a pleasure to state that EDII trained entrepreneurs have always pivoted to meet new needs for goods or services borne out of any crisis.

'Fintech sector valuation to touch \$150-160bn by 2025'

The report noted that over the past five years, Indian fintech companies have raised about \$10 billion from investors all over the world, catapulting the sector's total valuation to an estimated \$50-60 billion

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 13: India is strongly poised to realise a fintech sector valuation of USD 150-160 billion by 2025, translating to an incremental value-creation potential of about USD 100 billion, a report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Ficci said.

The report, titled "India FinTech: A USD 100bn opportunity", noted that over the past five years, Indian fintech companies have raised about USD 10 billion from investors all over the world, catapulting the sector's total valuation to an estimated USD 50-60 billion.

"India is strongly poised to re-

alise a fintech sector valuation of USD 150-160 billion by 2025, translating to an incremental value-creation potential of approximately USD 100 billion.

"Further, it is estimated that to meet this ambition, India's fintech sector will need investments of USD 20-25 billion over the next five years," it added.

The report said India has seen a sharp rise in the number of financial technology (fintech) firms. Of the over 2,100 fintech firms existing in India currently, 67 per cent have been set up in the past five years.

While Indian fintechs have cumulatively raised more than USD 10 billion since 2016, eight fintech



companies have reached the "billion-dollar-valuation" milestone (unicorns) and an additional 44 are valued at over USD 100 million as of date, it added.

The report said COVID-19 has accelerated the pace of digitisation

across categories. While certain fintech segments (for example, lending) may see a blip in the near term, there is a large sustainable behavioural change towards digital offerings in financial services.

Between March 2020 and January

2021, UPI payments (by value) have risen to 3x of their pre-pandemic value, while other payment modes have declined. Similar acceleration has also been seen in online broking, where the share of active clients with fintech discount brokers (Zerodha, Upstox, 5paisa) grew from 43 per cent to 57 per cent in the same timeframe. India has seen a significant surge in fintech valuations over the last 12-14 months, with three new unicorns (Pine Labs, Razorpay and Digit Insurance) and five new "Soonierms" (about to become unicorns) being created since January 2020, the report said.

"We believe that India's fintechs are at the precipice of a significant

value-creation of USD 100 billion over the next five years.

"To actualise this potential, the industry would require additional investments to the tune of USD 20-25 billion," BCG Managing Director and Partner Prateek Roongta said. Consequently, the number of Indian fintech unicorns, will more than double by 2025, he added.

"The fintechs that will achieve these milestones will be the ones that "master the core" by building deep, differentiating capabilities on their primary offerings. India will also see the emergence of ecosystem orchestrators and multinational fintechs, making it a global fintech powerhouse," Roongta said.

MCFC emerge champs



Bipin scores late to help Mumbai franchise bag their maiden Indian Super League title as they edge past ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in a thrilling final

POST NEWS NETWORK/ISL

Goa, March 13: Mumbai City FC (MCFC) muscled their dominance in the seventh edition of the Indian Super League (ISL) with an emphatic 2-1 win over ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) at the Fatorda Stadium, pocketing an enviable achievement of capping the season title with the League Shield.

Sergio Lobera's men made it two trophies in two weeks becoming just the second team to top the group phase and win the title. Bipin Singh scored a 90th-minute winner after a Tiri own goal (29th) had dragged Mumbai level. Bagan had earlier taken the lead through David Williams (18th).

There was an early penalty call when Bipin was challenged in the box by Pritam Kotal, but the referee displayed no interest. Thereafter, it was all about the Mariners. The Kolkata side pinned their opponents

AWARDS

- Golden Boot**
Igor Angulo (FC Goa)
- Golden Glove**
Amrinder Singh (MCFC)
- Hero of the League**
Roy Krishna (ATKMB)
- Winning Pass of the Season**
Alberto Noguera (FC Goa)
- Emerging Player**
Lalengmawia (NEUFC)

with a high pressing game which forced the Islanders into errors.

With pressure mounting on Mumbai's defence, the Kolkata side broke the deadlock first. Krishna dispossessed Ahmed Jahouh just outside the box and slipped a pass to Williams. The Australian got on to his stronger right foot and fired a firm shot past Amrinder.

But with Jahouh and his trade-

mark long deliveries, it was always going to get difficult for ATKMB. And with one such move, Mumbai found themselves back in the game. On seeing Bipin make a run up-front, Jahouh played a long ball from his own half into the Kolkata box. Tiri attempted a clearance but his header landed in his own goal.

Mumbai continued with attack after restart and Raynier Fernandes forced yet another save from Arindam after breaking into the area skipping past challenges from Kolkata defence. The Bagan keeper then produced a fine save to deny Hernan Santana from a free-kick.

After producing some fine saves, Arindam made a huge mistake which cost his team the title. After he failed to deal with a long ball properly, Bartholomew Ogbeche chased it down. The ball found its way to Bipin who made no mistake from close range.

NUMBERS' GAME

14 Goals scored by 'Golden Boot' award winner Igor Angulo (FC Goa, 21 games) and Roy Krishna (ATKMB, 22 games), most by any this season

8 Assists made by Alberto Noguera of FC Goa in 20 matches, most in this season

10 Cleansheets bagged by 'Golden Glove' award winner Amrinder Singh (MCFC) and Arindam Bhattacharja (ATKMB) in 23 matches each

64 No. of saves by Odisha FC custodian Arshdeep Singh (in 16 matches), most by any goalie this season

39 Goals scored by MCFC (in 23 games), most by any team, and they are followed by NEUFC and FC Goa (33 goals each); Chennaiyin FC scored the lowest number of goals (17) in 20 matches

44 Goals conceded by Odisha FC (in 20 matches), most among the participating teams this season; ATKMB conceded the lowest number of goals (18) in 23 games

India look to bounce back



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 13: Left shaken by a bunch of world-class operators, the Indian team's white-ball stars will be aiming to put up an improved batting effort in the second T20 International against England here, Sunday.

It was India's first white-ball game in three months and the rustiness of some of the premier shorter format players like KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya, and Yuzvendra Chahal's showed in the first game in which the hosts were clinically outplayed.

One defeat is never the end of the story and no critic can rule this Indian team out of the series on the basis of a singular performance especially because of its zeal to fight.

However, as skipper Virat Kohli talks about players with X-factors doing the job, he would expect Rishabh Pant and Pandya to do a bit more with their explosive hitting, which should not be confined to one audacious reverse scoop (Pant off Jofra Archer) or a falling ramp shot (Pandya off Ben Stokes).

They are more than capable and will be expected to give a far better account of themselves, trying to play more shots square of the wicket like Shreyas Iyer did during his

innings of 67 off 48 balls. Both Pandya (19 off 21 balls) and Pant (21 off 23 balls) weren't able to gauge the pace of the track as Archer and Mark Wood bowled fast and straight denying them any width for the cut shot. The extra bounce also didn't allow them to drive on the up.

"The wicket didn't allow you to hit the kind of shots you wanted to. Shreyas' innings was an example of how you could use the depth of the crease, ride the bounce because there was variable bounce at times, and hit the areas square of the wicket which others failed to do.

"It was just a below-par batting performance and England made us pay for it," Kohli had summed it up aptly at the end of the match.

The captain's acknowledgement of Iyer's performance could well mean that the wait for Suryakumar Yadav might get a tad longer with only one middle-order slot available currently.

However, Kohli's propensity to change his playing XI at the drop of a hat is well documented. While giving his team's oldest member, Shikhar Dhawan, a couple of matches is perfectly understandable but how long does he want to persist with the left-hander, who

looked completely out of sorts during his 4 off 12 balls.

Rohit Sharma, as per Kohli, is rested for a couple of matches having played six consecutive Test matches along with 14 days of hard quarantine at the start of his Australian sojourn.

But Rohit's presence is very necessary at the top of the order and even though no one is really talking about it, it's been long since the Indian skipper has had an impactful T20 performance. He is too good a player to miss out.

The bowling department didn't have enough runs on board to put up a fight but whether one of the three spinners can make way for a tearaway quick like Navdeep Saini remains to be seen.

Perhaps Yuzvendra Chahal could make way for Rahul Tewatia, who may not be as crafty a leg break bowler but certainly a decent one with good batting prowess.

Eoin Morgan, one among the more likeable international captains, has been provided a team that has its bases covered with 12 players plying their trade in the IPL.

Unless something really goes wrong, this England team is a contender to win the T20 World Cup trophy in October this year with way too many powerhouse performers.

Eves aim to level series against SA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 13: The absence of power-hitters has been Indian women's bane for the longest time and they would expect all-rounder Deepti Sharma and wicketkeeper-batter Sushma Verma to up the ante at the back-end during the fourth ODI against South Africa here Sunday.

Blown away in the series-opener, India had bounced back in style in the second ODI but Mithali Raj's side couldn't go the distance in the third game, going down narrowly by six runs via D/L method.

The hosts were outclassed by an unbeaten 131-ball 132 by opener Lizelle Lee, who anchored South Africa's run-chase with consummate ease after India had posted a competitive 248/5.

Despite going strong at one stage, India couldn't step up the rate with the team managing just 27 runs in the last 30 balls following the dismissal of vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur and this is an area the team will look to improve, especially with the World Cup less than a year away.

Deepti is one of the pillars of this Indian team but sadly, she hasn't been able to make any significant improvement when it comes to the power aspect of her game that has been lacking for a number of years.

With Neetu David's selection committee literally creating a 'harakiri' by keeping young Shafali Verma out of WODI set-up, the

only power-hitter in the team is Harmanpreet with likes of Jemimah Rodrigues, Punam Raut and skipper Mithali Raj all possessing same style of accumulating runs and not the greatest of strike-rates.

While the lower-order has failed to pack a punch with the bat, opener Rodrigues' lack of form for a long time (even before COVID-19 halted proceedings) will also be a concern for India.

The paucity of talent at the domestic level means that Rodrigues' doesn't face any worthy competition from her peers and even if she is complacent, one isn't left with too many options.

She is a vital cog in the batting unit along with Raut and Smriti Mandhana, who have looked in good touch in the series so far. The first Indian woman cricketer and second internationally to reach 10,000 runs, Mithali has had a decent run in both outings.

Veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami has regularly provided the breakthroughs and sits at the top of wicket-taker list with eight scalps and her form will be crucial to India's chances.

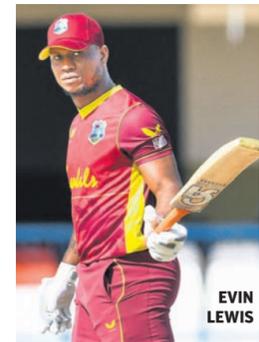
With four wickets so far, spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad have done the supporting role well, while Mansi Joshi too had picked up a couple of wickets in second ODI.

For South Africa, Lizelle Lee has been in scintillating form as she amassed 219 runs so far, which includes a 83 in the first ODI and the 132 not out in the last ODI.



Mithali Raj, with the Team India members, celebrates for reaching 10,000 international-run milestone, Friday

Lewis ton, Hope help West Indies seal ODI series



ASSOCIATED PRESS

North Point, March 13: A 192-run opening stand between Evin Lewis (103, 121b, 8x4, 4x6) and Shai Hope (84, 108b, 6x4) and cool finishing by Nicholas Pooran steered the West Indies to a five-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the second ODI. The West Indies also earned a winning 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Lewis and Hope set the strong foundation that allowed the West Indies to overtake Sri Lanka's 273/8 with two balls to spare. A middle order slump which saw the home side slip to 233/4 when captain Kieron Pollard was out in the 46th over put late pressure on the West Indies.

But Pooran made an unbeaten 35 from 38 balls to steer his team home in the final over in the West Indies' highest successful ODI run chase against Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka batted first after winning the toss and slumped to 50/3 in the ninth over. Danushka Gunathilaka's luck turned and his 96 (96b, 10x4, 3x6) led Sri Lanka's recovery. Gunathilaka seemed to have been wronged when he was given out for obstructing the field in the first ODI which the West Indies won by eight wickets.

He batted superbly on Friday, re-establishing the Sri Lanka innings in a partnership of exactly 100 for the fourth wicket with Dinesh Chandimal (71, 98b, 3x4, 2x6).

A quick-fire innings of 47 from 31 balls (2x4, 4x6) by Winandu Hasaranga lifted Sri Lanka to a competitive total. The final ODI is at the same venue, Sunday.

BAUTISTA AGUT ENDS RUBLEV RUN

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Doha, March 13: Roberto Bautista Agut ended Andrey Rublev's Qatar Open title defense in the semifinals by upsetting the Russian 6-3, 6-3. Rublev was also aiming for back-to-back titles after winning the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament in Rotterdam Sunday.

The Russian was in the unusual position of playing a semifinal without having spent a minute on court in the singles tournament following a bye and two walkovers, though he had been playing doubles. Rublev

served eight aces but still had his serve broken four times by Bautista Agut. Bautista Agut is into his second final of 2021 following a loss to David Goffin in Montpellier last month. His win at the Qatar Open in January 2019 remains his most recent title on the tour.

The 13th-ranked Spanish player will face Nikoloz Basilashvili for the title in Saturday's final after the Georgian beat Taylor Fritz 7-6(7-3), 6-1. Basilashvili is in his first final since July 2019 after a Qatar campaign which included a win over Roger Federer's in the quarterfinals.



Yuki beats Prajnesh, next faces Ramkumar

Dubai: Comeback-man Yuki Bhambhani proved he is back to his best with a convincing win over India No.1 Prajnesh Gunneswaran in the Qualifiers of the Dubai Duty Free Championships, here Saturday. Yuki, who is competing on a Protected Ranking (PR) knocked out his seventh seed compatriot 6-1, 6-4 in the opening round of the USD 2,048,855 hard court tournament. Yuki has not lost to Prajnesh in three meetings. He had beaten the left-hander twice in 2017 - Bangalore and Karshi. The 28-year-old is now up against another compatriot Ramkumar Ramanathan, who knocked out sixth seed Russian Evgeny Donskoy 6-4, 6-4. In his five matches against Ramkumar, Yuki has emerged winner on four occasions.

TUSSLING FOR GLORY



A player each from Odisha Police (in red) and OGP club tussle for ball during their match, which was won by Odisha Police 1-0, at the Capital Ground in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Earlier on the day at the same venue, Rising Student Club defeated SAI-STC by a solitary goal. At Kalinga Stadium, E.Co. Railway edged past Sports Hostel 1-0. PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Archers escape unhurt despite train catch fire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Ten members of the Madhya Pradesh archery contingent escaped unhurt after their coach of the Dehradun-bound Shatabdi Express caught fire Saturday. The train's C-5 bogie caught fire near Kasro railway station.

The train was coming from the national capital and all passengers, including the 10 members of the archery contingent, were evacuated and shifted to another compartment.

"The fire spread out fast from near the bathroom and all our equipment and luggage were burnt. Thankfully, we all are evacuated and safe," recurve women archer Amey Rai said.

To ensure that their participation at the Nationals is not affected, the Archery Association of India (AAI) has arranged the equipment and clothes for the archers.