

## State Elections Start March 27, Counting On May 2

More than 18 crores are eligible to vote in these elections, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said



New Delhi : Elections in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Assam, and Puducherry will be held from March 27 and the results will be announced on May 2, the Election Commission said today. Bengal will vote in eight phases,

March 27, April 1, April 6, April 10, April 17, April 22, April 26, and April 29. Tamil Nadu and Kerala will vote in a single round on April 6. Puducherry will also vote on the same day.

Assam will vote on March 27, April 1, and April 6. The model code of conduct is now (Page-8)

## Why Petrol and diesel prices continue to soar, when and how relief is expected



New Delhi : Why Petrol and diesel prices are increasing? Petrol and diesel prices continue to soar with no limit in sight. It has breached Rs 100-mark in some states. After Rajasthan, the petrol price crossed the 100 per liter mark in Madhya Pradesh when fuel rates were increased for the 10th day in a row. The increase in fuel prices even continued on Saturday for

the 12th consecutive day.

In April last year, India had supported the decision of the major oil-producing countries to cut production as there was a sharp fall in demand amid the Covid-19 pandemic. India has urged the OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and OPEC plus countries to not go for a production cut as that is

impacting the fuel price in India, Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Sunday. "There are two main reasons behind the fuel price rise. The international market has reduced fuel production and manufacturing countries are producing less fuel to gain more profit. This is making the consumer countries suffer," the minister said.

There are several reasons such as huge tax imposed by the Centre and state governments, affecting the petrol and diesel prices. Besides, there are global factors too behind the continuous increase in fuel prices. "Brent crude price in the international market has gone as high as \$65 per barrel. This crude rate is the

highest in the last 13 months. The reason behind this jump in crude oil is due to America, which is one of the biggest producers of crude oil, facing a problem with the supply. There is a huge dip witnessed in the US," he said. As per experts say 40 percent of crude production in Texas has been hit due to unfavorable climatic conditions. Apparently, due to extreme cold condition pipeline in Texas have frozen and employees are unable to work in this hostile condition. which is affecting the supply.

Another big reason is that OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), which supplies almost 40 percent of crude to the world, has been (Page-8)

## New guidelines for social media, OTT platforms

New Delhi : The government on Thursday announced new guidelines aimed at curbing misuse of social media and OTT platforms. The prominent feature of these guidelines was the government's direction to platforms to appoint grievance mechanisms and for them to disclose the first originator of mischievous information. The rules also asked the platforms to remove content depicting nudity or morphed pictures of women. The rules were laid out in a press conference addressed by Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar and Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.



Both the ministers said that the guidelines were prepared after widespread consultations.

Prasad said that social media intermediaries will be categorised into two categories

1. Intermediaries
2. Significant social media intermediaries

Prasad said that the classification has been done based on the number of users and that the government will soon notify the exact number of users based on which the classification will be done. Significant social media intermediaries will have greater obligations. As per the new rules, social media intermediaries have to

appoint a grievance officer, who shall register complaints in 24 hours. The grievance redressal official must be resident in India, and monthly compliance reports will have to be filed by social media platforms.

Social media platforms on being asked by court or government will be required to disclose the first originator of the mischievous information. Significant social media intermediaries will have to appoint a chief compliance officer in India. In addition to this, the platform will be required to have a nodal contact person-resident in India-for coordination with law enforcement agencies, and have a resident grievance officer (Page-15)

## State Budget 2021-22: A Social Hit But Flops in Job creation, Growth

The capital outlay has been slashed by Rs 725 crore and Programme expenditure hiked by mere Rs 1000 crore. The ballooning gross borrowings made Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari stick to FRBM virtue



Bhubaneswar, : Unlike the mantra of higher spending in the Union Budget 2021-22, and when developed countries like the US and others in European Union have not hesitated in opening up their coffers after the pandemic

shock, the Odisha Budget 2021-22 surprisingly decided to remain inside the 'LaxmanRekha' of FRBM Act. Though Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari may win plaudits from some fiscal experts for (Page-15)



## Three From Odisha In Hockey Squad For Europe Tour



Bhubaneswar : Three hockey players from Odisha have been selected to represent India during the Europe tour. The players are Birendra Lakra, Amit Rohidas, and Dipsan Tirkey. Led by captain-goal-keeper PR Sreejesh, the 22-

member squad will leave for Krefeld, Germany from Bengaluru on February 21. They will play the home team on February 28 and March 2. The team will then proceed to Antwerp, Belgium where they are scheduled to play against the

Great Britain team on March 6 and March 8. The Indian Men's Team last participated in an international competition in February 2020. They took on Australia during the FIH Hockey Pro League matches held in Bhubaneswar. 

## Take The Lead In Industrialising Districts: Asit Tripathy To Collectors

Bhubaneswar : Principal Advisor to Chief Minister and Chairman Western Odisha Development Council (WODC), Asit Tripathy was on a visit to Jharsuguda on Monday to review the ongoing development projects. He was accompanied by Industry Secretary Hemant Sharma and IPICOL MD, Nitin B Jawale during the visit.

The team reviewed the progress of investment proposals for the creation of employment opportunities in different sectors. Tripathy directed the Collectors to take the lead in the industrialisation of their districts by leveraging the facilitating policies of the Government.


There are many proactive policies introduced by the Odisha Government



which are proactive and have created a benchmark at the national level, said Tripathy. The GO SWIFT portal of the Odisha Government has been praised by the NITI Aayog.

"Our focus was to review the progress of industries which got clearance through the Single Window mechanism in Sundergarh, Deogarh, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, and

Sambalpur districts. I wanted to review the ground rather than doing it from Bhubaneswar," Tripathy added.

Different steps have been taken to address the concerns of the stakeholders. The remaining issues about land acquisition, forest clearance, and coordination will be addressed at the earliest, he added. 

## National Road Safety Month Observed at UAIL

Raygada, : 'The National Road Safety Month' was observed at Utkal Alumina International Limited, a unit of Hindalco Industries of Aditya Birla Group from 18th January to 17th February 2021. The National Road Safety Week is being observed every year. The month-long campaign i.e. "National Road Safety Month" was observed across the nation under the theme "Sadak Suraksha - Jeevan Raksha". As a responsible corporate UAIL observed the month-long campaign for a social cause of safety and mobility.



All the cross-functional teams proactively participated in this event within their respective domains to take this initiative further. All the programs were con-

ducted adhering to strict Covid safety protocol and guidelines.

This grand event raised its curtains with a display of safety banners, Mass Talk on Road Safety, and leaf-

lets distribution on safety awareness to all the workmen in its first week. Vehicle audit in the project area was conducted by the safety department and training for drivers by


RTO Raygada were conducted in the first week of safety month.

In the second week, Road safety mass talks were conducted at the Power plant, Project, and Finance departments. Also, road safety training for operators and staff was conducted by Road Safety Mission, Mumbai.

In the third week, vehicle audits were conducted in the Refinery area. Various competitions like slogan competition, quiz competition on road safety were conducted for the staffs and employees, where around 100 people

have participated with utmost enthusiasm.

School bus and transport vehicle inspection and road diversion audits were some of the major events organized in the fourth week.

Speaking on the occasion, the unit head of UAIL, Mr. Beig has expressed that it's the responsibility of every individual and employee to contribute to the safe road culture by wearing Helmets, maintaining speed limits, prudent use of traffic and road safety signals, and spreading awareness and sensitising people on it. 



# Churning in North may impact Bengal, change nation's course



**Prof. Shivaji Sarkar**

Former HOD in English journalism in IIMC, Delhi

In a changing political perception, northern India is becoming more vocal in the wake of farmers' agitation. Will it change national politics?

Till a few months ago the region was not ready to accept any criticality against the NDA. The deviation was considered unnatural. It would still be a bit too much to say that the voters are drifting away but the people are forcefully discussing the moves that they consider harsh like rising prices. It is in contrast to the 2019 Lok Sabha poll verdict. The supposed discontentment on various policies and performance was high but faith in prime minister Narendra Modi was giving the BJP a thumping majority.

Would it now impact the political syndrome? Punjab has seen the rout of BJP and its former ally Shiromani Akali Dal in the civic polls. Haryana is upset and Rajasthan may be changing. Now farm leaders' move to launch the campaign on tractors in Bengal to awaken the voters may heat the mini-general polls.

The sit-ins around Delhi by farmers from Punjab, Haryana, and western UP against the three farm bills signify that the people in this region and across the castes possibly are changing their opinion about the ruling combine. The issue of two types of mandis - the APMC and unregulated private outside it - has raised

suspicion. It is accentuated by the perception that the MSP is to be done away with and the farming class would be thrown into deep trouble as two big industrial houses are ruling the roost. The shift is being felt in the western UP's Jat belt, who overwhelmingly voted for the BJP.

The eastern UP is slowly responding to the moves of the western brothers. There is some churning but the expression is through popular jokes. Maybe the recent visits of Modi to his constituency and the beautification of Varanasi are doing the trick.

As many farmers are leaving the sit-ins around Delhi for the harvest season, the scenario is changing to the massive rallies being held across the rural hinterlands. The newly emerged farm leader Rakesh Singh Tikait's call to his clan to boycott the BJP leaders is getting effective. It started in Punjab and now the Jat belt of western UP, Haryana, and Rajasthan are seemingly getting swept with such feelings. Tikait and his fellow leaders have also announced that if anyone even mistakenly entertains a member of the ruling combine, he would have to feed 100 persons as a penalty. They do not conceal that they had voted the BJP to power in 2014 and

2019.

Till a few months back, the Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi tried to politicize the rape and murder of a Hathras girl that led to wide media coverage and also arrests of some newsmen. Despite societal concern in the region over the highhanded approach of the UP government, it was allowed to be passed off as an "aberration" and did not dent the popular hold of the party.

Within four months there is change. Now the normally quiet rural people are openly discussing the situation and to the surprise of many, they are mocking the leaders, who are supporting private companies and singing paeans for them. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement that India would be left with only 23 public sector companies has also not enamored them. The rising prices are being attributed to the move to boost profiteering of the big houses, which are on a spree to capture airports, roads, arms, other businesses in the country and abroad, and the railways. Even people see their hands in the game of increasing petrol, diesel prices and junking of people's old vehicles and tractors. The people are no more buying the party's

campaign that private is needed to cleanse the polity and a prospering economy.

Ridiculing leaders at tea vendors or moving tempos and tirries (local three-wheeler transports) has become a usual pastime. Even the earlier saying that one who does not have a family doesn't need to be corrupt has changed to 'one who has a family would have limited greed' and 'if you have many families you would be too greedy'. Such mentions follow loud laughter. Some have come out with jokes - 'in 1980 baratis (marriage party) were welcomed with pan parag, in 2021 we are anti-dowry, just pay us for petrol'. Even manycore sanghis are coining wary jokes and coming out with 'performance' charts.

Overtly the farmer movement in the region is non-political, but a dormant Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) has come back to life with a call from its leader Ajit Singh to Tikait. After the Republic Day tractor parade violence, Tikait had gone into depression. Singh's call and his son Jayant's support by sending thousands to the borders with water from his village in cans has not only revived the movement but the RLD has also got a boost. The Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav is trying to ride RLD. Congress is watching and acting

quietly to blunt the sharp attacks of the BJP.

The BJP is not unaware of the churning. On Sunday, February 21, it held a meeting of national office-bearers, state in-charge, co-in-charge, and state chiefs. The day-long meeting inaugurated by Modi discussed threadbare the booth level strategies in poll-bound states and Bengal, the toughest and cynosure of its eyes. Party general secretary Bhupendra Yadav said the BJP in its political resolution has committed itself to uproot what he called the undemocratic government of Mamata Banerjee and retain Assam. He said the BJP would reach out to farmers to bust the myths being spread by the Congress on farm laws.


That's natural. It would fan out its cadre to Bengal to counter sharp attacks by Mamata Banerjee. The recent cocaine seizure from an ABVP youth leader and CBI call at CM's nephew's house for investigating coal scams are being keenly watched by the voters. Farm and political leaders from other states plan to visit the state to boost campaigning against the center. Yes, Bengal is warming up every day. How northern changes fan it or not needs to be seen? The journey would not be easy in a do-or-die battle.



## RCCI Celebrate It's Foundation Day

Rourkela, Feb 23: Rourkela Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) celebrated its 60th foundation day amidst State Sports Minister TusharKantiBehera on 15th February at Brahmani Club premises. As RCCI's office building is being renovated, the foundation day function was organised at the Brahmani Club. Sports Minister TusharkantiBehera was the chief guest at the function. RCCI president Praveen Garg presided over the function. Many former presidents Pawan Kumar Jain, Santosh Pareek, BrijMohan Agarwal, Ramavtar Agarwal, AnupamDoshi, K KPoddar, senior member R P Gupta and other members were present at the function. A cake was cut by the chief guest and former Presidents to mark the occasion. Mr. Behera praised the activities of RCCI and told the members that he would be visiting Rourkela every month so that if they have any suggestion for the



betterment of Rourkela they can share with him. He would take up their suggestions to a higher level for implementation as much as possible. Sports Minister also informed the members about the development of operationalization of air services at Rourkela. He expressed hope that within few months the air services would become functional at Rourkela. He told the members that in this connection a high-level meeting was held at Rourkela on 15th February. Mrs. Usha Padhee, Joint Secretary (U) Ministry of Civil Aviation, State Government's Principal Secretary of Commerce & Transport Department Madhusudan Padhee, and senior officials of Rourkela Steel Plant were present. In the meeting, it was informed that Rourkela would be allowed a C3 category license. The upgraded C3 license would pave the way for the operation of ATR 72 from the Rourkela airstrip. RCCI members welcomed this development and hoped that city's dream of air connectivity would soon be materialized. 

## Naveen Patnaik lays the foundation for India's biggest hockey stadium

Rourkela, Feb 16: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of India's biggest hockey stadium and also launched various infrastructure development projects worth Rs 4915 Crore at a mega function organised at BPUT Campus on 16th February. The stadium is being built for the men's Hockey World Cup-2023.

While laying the foundation stone CM announced that the stadium would be named after eminent tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda. "It is going to be the most modern field for hockey. The hockey stadium will inspire and encourage the youths to dream big. The stadium will show to the world that Odias are second to none," said CM addressing the gathering. The state government would spend Rs 120 crore for the purpose. State government

sources said the stadium will be a new benchmark in global stadium design for hockey, offering one of the finest spectator experiences with a seating capacity of over 20,000. "The stadium will be a model of green, functional, cost-effective design. Each seat will have uninterrupted sightlines and the spectators will be closer to the pitch than at any other hockey stadium in the world," said a sports department official. "Hockey spirit is in the air and water of Sundargarh, also known as the cradle of hockey. Rourkela has earned its place on the world sports map because of hockey. When the International Hockey Federation (FIH) gave a proposal to host the world cup again in Odisha in 2023, Rourkela came to my mind first. Hosting the world cup will be the biggest gift for the hockey-loving people of the district," said Naveen add-



ing India has left behind countries like Belgium, Australia, and Malaysia to host the mega sporting event. State-owned Idco has been assigned to take up construction of the stadium, which is expected to be ready by June 2022. Odisha chief secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra said that the proposed world-class hockey stadium will be developed within one year. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also launched various infrastructure development projects worth Rs 4915 Crore, includ-

ing the hockey stadium. The projects related to drinking water, irrigation, health services, roads and bridges, education, sanitation, livelihood initiatives, smart city development, infrastructure development, women and child care, clean environment, skill development, and sports infrastructure for Sundargarh district. The chief minister said, his government will urge the Centre for the inclusion of Mundari and Ho languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

## Sundargarh Retains Sahani Cup

Sundargarh : Host Sundargarh retained the title of 61st Senior Men's Inter-District Football Championships for Sahani Cup after defeating Cuttack 4-2 in the summit clash. The winner was decided through a tie-breaker as the match had ended in a goalless draw in stipulated time. Sundargarh players found the net four times while Cuttack could penetrate the Sundargarh citadel twice




only in the tiebreaker. Last year Sundargarh had defeated Rourkela to clinch the trophy at Bargah. Mahesh Pradhan of Sundargarh was declared player of the final match

while the host team's custodian Amit Kerketta was awarded the Best Player of the tournament.

Orissa Olympic Association Secretary Abhijit Pal attended the final match as

chief guest and distributed the prizes. Sundargarh District Athletic Association (DAA) organized the 61st edition of the Sahani Cup between 6 to 14th February at four different venues - Kinjirma, Sebtibahal, Tasladihi, and Bhavanipur Sports Complex, Sundargarh.

DAA Secretary Prabhat Kumar Bhol presented Rs. one lakh cash award to the members of the Champion Sundargarh team. 

## Interaction meeting under Vocal for Local initiative Organised

Rourkela, Feb 18: An interaction session was organized between Local Industries and planning officials of the different Departments of the Rolling Mills area of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), by PIVD Section of Materials Management Department, RSP on 18th February 2021. Mr. C R Mohapatra, CGM Incharge (MM & Marketing) presided over the session. In all 15 industrialists from Dis-



trict Small Scale Industries Association (DSSIA), Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (OASME), Odisha Young Entrepreneurs Association (OYEA) along

with 15 officials from New Plate Mill, Hot Strip Mill, and Silicon Steel Mill and Materials Management Department participated in the program. In his opening remarks, Mr.

Mohapatra emphasised increasing steel consumption in the region by encouraging local industries to enhance their capabilities. The objective of the meeting was to explore possibilities of sourcing spares from local Small Scale Industries and focused on sourcing of Rolling Mills Spares through local industries and their capability to supply. Notably in the Plant Level Advisory Committee

(PLAC) meeting held in October 2020, suggestions were made by the participants for such interactions.

The technical discussions were facilitated by G K Dash, CGM (MM & Stores), P S Rajkumar, GM (MM), and S Panda, GM (Marketing). The meeting was coordinated by Ms. Anindita Mahapatra, DGM (MM-PIVD). It may be noted that this is the 2nd such interactive session orga-

nized by RSP. The first meeting of this kind was held with local industries and planning officers of Raw Material Handling Plant, Sinter Plants, and Blast Furnaces. This also will go a long way in increasing the local consumption of steel in the region under the 'Purvodaya' scheme launched by Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel, Government of India, in January 2020. 



# NHRC asked Odisha Chief Secretary to relocate Satkosia villagers

Kendrapada (Rajesh Kumar Behera) : The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recently asked the Chief Secretary of Odisha to complete the rehabilitation and resettlement of five revenue villagers displaced due to tiger and wildlife conservation projects in Satkosia in Angul district within three months.

While monitoring the case filed by Activist-Lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy the Apex rights Panel passed the order recently.

Tripathy raised the issue of rehabilitation and basic human rights issue of forest dwellers of five Revenue Villages in Satkosia



wildlife division. The Commission took cognizance

of the present complaint on 30-01-2014 and sought a report from the Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha.

The Commission directed the State Secretary, to submit an additional/requisite report in the matter. The response is awaited and the matter is pending for want of some additional information. Being a seven years old case, the matter has been placed before the Commission for reconsideration of its earlier proceedings. The present case relates to the rehabilitation of forest dwellers, whose villages, came under the tiger conservation project and were forced to evict, but the state government has not taken any settlement and rehabilitation measures. In the above circumstances, the Commission directs the Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha to look into the matter and do needful within three months for settlement of Forest dwellers. The report further stated that as regards to relocation of village Marada in Mahanadi (WL) Division is concerned; due to left-wing extremist problem, the progress has been delayed. Earlier the Commission asked the Director, NTCA, to expedite the relocation and submit a report, but the Authority failed to respond.

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## Dibakar remains a ward member for the last 35 years

not spend a single rupee to win the polls



Kendrapada Rajesh Kumar Behera): Since the last seven polls, he is yet to be defeated at the hands of his rival candidates for the post of ward member and continuing his winning streak. Neither he has spent a single rupee to woo the electorates for casting their votes to ensure his victory. Such a unique Dalit person is Dibakar Mallick. Meet the middle-aged soft-spoken, poverty-stricken, and good Samaritan Dibakar Mallick, a Dalit, of Malikasahi under Garadapur block. For 35 years, he gets elected as the ward member

of Ward No-3 of Garadapur Gram panchayat.

Dibakar, being a farmer, used to collect bread and butter for his family by cultivating his agricultural land and also keeping goats. But he always remains ready to help the fellow villagers and people of the neighboring villages if he comes across, someone who is in trouble. He used to stand with the people and lends his support. It differentiates him from other candidates for winning the heart of electorates. Besides, he always raised his voice for the development of his ward.

Though he has developed his ward and always busy lending his supporting hand either in the medical case or for sanctioning government-sponsored schemes and projects, including housing schemes, MGNREGS, to the people of his ward, he never wants to avail government-sponsored benefits and projects for him. As a result, he has been staying in a thatched house. He has never spent a single pie for winning the election, he generally meets his voter once during election time by going to their doors. It is enough for him to win the election. "As long as my voters want to see me as their ward member, I will contest in the coming poll", stated Dibakar.

## Bhubaneswar Cycling and Adventurous club pedaled to reach Pattamundai in 5.30 hours



Kendrapada (Rajesh Kumar Behera) : 100 kilometers distance covered in 5.30 hours to reach at Pattamundai on Cuttack-Chandabali road and that by pedaling the bicycles. Two top brass of the state police department along with 22 others has achieved.

24 members of Bhubaneswar Cycling and Adventurous club led by senior IPS Sanjib Panda, the State Transport Commissioner, and the Additional DG, Lalit Das, started their expedition on bicycle from Bhubaneswar at 6.30 am on Sunday. They came to Pattamundai by covering a distance of around 100 kilometers only in 5.30 hours via Salepur

on Cuttack -chandabali road. They have planned to return to Bhubaneswar before evening to complete their tour.

Keeping a goal of covering a 200-kilometer distance within 13 hours, they started the cycling. Besides, the duo top brass - doctors, engineers, and general youth were in the 24 members team. According to IPS Sanjeeb Panda, the State Transport Commissioner, who was the president of Bhubaneswar cycling and adventure club, the event was conducted under the affiliation of a France-based Audax club. Those who will conduct such an event will get the certificate from the internationally recognised France-based Audax club. "We

have organized the event under the fold of Bhubaneswar Cycling and Adventurous club. We have fixed the target to complete our 200-kilometer race within 13 hours", stated Lalit Das, the Additional DG of Police, Cuttack Headquarters.

The Kendrapada cycle and Adventure club members led by Rajib lochan panda, the SDPO of Kendrapada, Matrudutta Mohanty, the convenor of the club, felicitated the Bhubaneswar Cycling and Adventurous club members by providing flower bouquets near police aid post at Duhuria and praised the effort of senior IPS official to encourage cycle riding to remain fit and fine.



# Baripada ITDA breaches GST norms over development works

Baripada, 28 January:- While core of rupees are sponsored by the Government over development works for tribal belts across the State, the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) of Baripada one of the Government Agency allegedly found busy manipulating the government fund ignoring their higher authorities. Some instances have come to light for the misappropriation of the Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) and Local Area Development Fund of an MLA. The bills on the construction work of projects were approved by the officers and payments against the bill were taken without doing any work physically.

Here is an instance; Sananda Marandi during his tenure as the MLA of Baripada had provided Rs. 5 lakh from his LAD fund in 2015-16 for the construction of Guard Walls in two locations. One would be erected near the bridge side of Raghunathpur and another guard wall would be erected close to the bridge in Janardanpur Ward No-22 through a construction agency. Later it was approved by the department for the construction of guard walls in the two locations. As per case



record no-94, the bill of Rs. 5 lakh had been paid to the construction agency during 2017-18 but surprisingly the guard walls were not erected at those sights physically. Neither the MLA nor the concerned officers have physically inquired into the matter before approving the bill.

Satrugna Mohanta, a citizen of Janardanpur ward says no guard wall was erected at the bridge site. The RD department had erected a bridge and made a protection wall for it.

A similar instance came to light in Korasahi of Jamdapa under Haticot GP. A Cement Concrete Road (CC Road)

with a guard wall under Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) near the bridge in Korasahi of 8-Jamdapa with a cost of Rs. 4 lakh found no sign of guard wall. The department had approved money against the bill vide case record no-81 during 2014-15.

Construction of a canal system of 8-Batakata to Jamdapa vide case record no-129 during 2016-17 for Rs. 5 lakh under Special Development Programme (SDP) had found 50 percent of work and the department had already provided the total cost of the work against the bill.

Reliable sources said as many as Rs. 35 lakhs LAD

funds along with SDP and BRGF fund had been properly utilized in the name of six projects were done particularly in Korasahi of Jamdapa village. Only the name of the projects had been changed from time to time and less than 50 percent of the work had been completed.

When the local leaders had come to know about the department had not provided GST of suppliers after taking accessories from them for tribal development works, Sarashkana MLA Budhan Murmu gave a petition to the GST department in Bhubaneswar and its Baripada office respectively.

The enforcement team of

GST from Baripada in the Mayurbhanj district raided the office (ITDA) and seized important documents from the office and found against the Assistant Engineers and Junior Engineer who had violated Goods and Service Tax (GST). The team had brought notice over these officers of the ITDA department that had executed works during the period between 2017 and 31 July 2020. These officers had violated the GST norm over execution works with an amount of Rs.4.58 crore were done and the Assistant Engineers and JEs had submitted false vouchers of the suppliers and a few numbers of vouchers of the suppliers

had GST numbers and they had not paid the actual amounts of GST.

As per GST official report, Santosh Kumar Das executed works of Rs.80 lakh during the period of 1-7-2017 to 31-7-2020, Lambodhar Majhi executed Rs. 25 lakh during the period of 1-4-2017 to 31-7-2020, Surai Murmu executed Rs. 15 lakh during the period of 1-4-2019 to 31-7-2020, Pitambar Raybabu executed Rs.78 lakh from the period of 1-7-2017 to 31-7-2020, Sandeep Kumar Patra executed Rs.75 lakh from the period of 1-7-2017 to 31-7-2020, Durgamadhava Mishra executed Rs.95 lakh from the period of 1-7-2017 to 31-7-2020 and Kamalochan Tudu executed Rs. 90 lakh from the period of 1-7-2017 to 31-7-2020. They had taken the materials from the suppliers.

In one instance Assistant Engineer Dayamadhava Mishra approved the works of Rs. 95 lakh for the period of 1-7-2017 to 31-7-2020 did not pay the tax of Rs. 3, 39,741 that the GST enforcement team had inquired about. Enforcement Officer of GST in Baripada, Rajani Kanta Sethy said that the enforcement had verified the GST of 56 suppliers who supplied their materials for different project works in the ITDA.

## Meeting to resolve Odisha-West Bengal border dispute



Mayurbhanj :-Though the Revenue minister Sudam Marandi had officially stated about not an inch of land will not be allowed to be occupied by neighboring states like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra

Pradesh, the inter-state boundary row continues. Most parts of the district like Mayurbhanj and Balasore are affected over the row. Finally, the government of Odisha takes up the issue. The rampant illegal sand mining in

river Subarnarekha in Balasore district and some medium and small river bodies in Mayurbhanj district are now under the clutch of West Bengal and Jharkhand states. Nearly 275 under 11 blocks in Mayurbhanj district two

blocks Bhograi and Jaleswar in Balasore district are affected besides the government of Odisha loses crore revenue from sand mining. Knowing concerned officials of tehsil, become mute spectators as mafias are taking advantage of illegal mining as the government does not resolve the inter-state boundary dispute.

While Moroda, Rashgobindpur, Rairangpur, Jamda, Sarashkana, Triring, Sukruli, along with four other blocks in the Mayurbhanj district and two blocks Jaleswar and Bhograi in Balasore district are facing the territorial dispute for a long time. As a result, the

inhabitants of border villages are deprived of government facilities, while the neighboring states show sympathy and provide government help by issuing their voter identity card and other official documents which are being supported by them to cast votes to them.

In a bid to resolve the Odisha-West Bengal border row, a high-level meeting was held between officials in Odisha State and Paschim Medinipur District of West Bengal at West Medinipur Circuit House 25 this month. The discussion was held over reference points in both Odisha and West Bengal states. When contacted,

Jaleswar Tehsildar Khirod Panda said the discussion was held in the meeting over Geotagging in the inter-state border boundary as it already installed 36 poles in 12 disputed villages of Jaleswar Tehsil in Balasore by revenue officials from both states.

The NGT directed both state governments to take immediate measures for a clear explanation of the inter-boundary. But the governments of both states did not pay heed to the issue since 2018 until both the parties met at Dantan (WB) in September last year and the ORSAC intervened for a survey.



# This Maha Farmer Bought A Helicopter Worth Rs 30 Crore To 'Sell Milk'



Bhiwandi: A farmer and entrepreneur in Maharashtra's Bhiwandi bought a helicopter to help him travel across the country and promote his dairy business.

Janardhan Bhoir recently

ventured into the dairy business and decided to invest in a helicopter worth Rs 30 crore.

According to a DNA report, Janardhan says he often has to travel to Punjab,

Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat due to his dairy business. However, not all cities have airports, so he had to travel for long hours to reach his destination. That's when he decided to purchase the helicopter at a friend's suggestion.

"I have to frequently travel for my business, that's the reason I bought a helicopter. I need it often to look after my dairy business and farming," Janardhan told local reporters.

The helicopter was sent to Janardhan's village for trial and he also offered village panchayat members to take a ride in his helicopter.



He has made arrangements to build a helipad with a protective wall on a 2.5-acre land. There will

also be a garage for the helicopter, a pilot room, and a technician room.

The helicopter will be

delivered to him on March 15. The rich farmer who has property worth Rs 100 crore has also a real-estate business.

## Naveen Government treating farmers as 'Enemy of the State' : BJP



Champur : Farmers' are frustrated as their paddy is not being bought in the Mandis. Several farmers have tokens, others not, but no one was able to sell. Govt officials were entrusted the mandis with targets but none turned up. In the meantime, the time-bound tokens lapse. The state govt has turned a deaf ear to the problems of the farmers. The outraged farmers today surrounded the Champua sub-collectors office and protested. They have warned that if their paddy is not

bought in the mandis, the lamps will be locked. BJP today took the issue to the streets. On this occasion, BJP leaders lashed out at the state government. The state executive member Dr. Murli Manohar Sharma who led the farmers' agitation said the state government has been misleading farmers in the name of Target. After receiving the token, the farmers rush in vain to the mandi and the lamp every day to sell their paddy only to get a reply that the target hasn't come. While the Modi

government is taking several landmark steps for the farmers, the BJD government is shy away from their rights. Speaking on the occasion, BJP state vice-president Sukeshi Oram said that despite the protests in the assembly, the demonstration of farmers on the highways and agitation in the lamps Mandi problem does not end. This is because the Naveen government is treating the farmers as an enemy of the state. This government is not doing what it says. A few days ago, the government said

all the paddy would be taken from all farmers. Besides state vice-president Sukeshi Oram and state executive member Dr Murli Manohar Sharma, state executive member Bhavanishkar Nayak, district president Anshuman Sabuj Mahanta Varma, district general secretary and district councilor member Anubrat Behera were present on the occasion. District Vice President Debaprasad Mishra, Aganucharan Mahanta, Swapna Sahu, District Secretary Neelamani Mahant, District Youth Front President Hemranjan Barik, State Youth Front Executive Member Prakash Mallick, District Youth Front Vice President Vikas Sarawagi, District OBC Front President Mitrabhanu Mahakud, also joined the protest.

## Govt In Ukraine Allegedly Put A Man's Underwear Up For Auction After He Couldn't Pay Off His Debt

The Ukrainian government is coming down hard on debtors it seems, and confiscating their valuables and putting them up for auction. The raids on defaulters have led to authorities even putting a man's underwear up for sale. According to BBC, several pairs of underpants were seized in the central city of Kryvyi Rih and are advertised on a justice ministry website for online auctions, called Setam. The starting price for one pair is

for sale. And an MP, Yevgeniy Brahar, was mocked for suggesting that the woman, who was a pensioner, should sell her dog to pay her bills. Setam was launched in 2015, and Ukrainian justice ministry figures say that some 14.1bn hryvnia (£364 million) of the property has been sold on it so far. The ministry also donates some confiscated property directly to orphanages, hospitals, and schools. A report published by the



19.4 hryvnia (Rs 50). The report says that the state has also been auctioning off cows and sheep. The Covid pandemic has made a dent in the finances and has raised the number of registered Ukrainian debtors above two million. The number of debtors grew by 300,000 last year, according to BBC. There was anger on Ukrainian social media last year when two confiscated pet dogs were put up

OECD economic think-tank at the end of last year says that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to trigger Ukraine's worst recession in decades, leaving more than 9 million of its 41m people in poverty. And according to UN research, since the beginning of the pandemic more than 40% of Ukrainian families have seen at least one family member lose their job, BBC reported.



# The solution to the farm impasse



Sirish C. Mohanty

The country must break out of the cycle where states escape their responsibilities and the Centre then pushes in, accumulating more power in the process. Let the states take ownership of state subjects. The current imbroglio over the farm laws highlights the Centre's growing intrusion into what are constitutionally state subjects. But they also highlight another uncomfortable reality. Many of the most serious economic afflictions facing the country - agriculture, water, power, land, health, and education - are state subjects. And the failures of the states to do justice on subjects that are well within their constitutional obligations have created space for a futuristic Centre to weigh in.

Here is an example. "Public Order" and "Police" fall under the "State List" of the Seventh Schedule, putting

the onus on state governments for the maintenance of the law and order in their states. In 1999, the Parliamentary Standing Committee observed that "of late the dependence of State Governments, all over, on the Central Para Military Forces in dealing with difficult situations arising on the law and order front has increased significantly. This changing trend over the years has given rise to a situation of contradiction wherein while on the one hand, the State Governments tend to demand more and more power and autonomy, on the other hand, they appear inadequately prepared to perform; one of the most primary duties of states for maintaining law and order and peace and normalcy. On every incident of minor or major proportion, they tend to seek the help of the central police forces, which only throws poor light on the efficiency of the states in

dealing with adverse situations. Little has changed. Over the past two decades, even as the states continued to underinvest in their police, the size of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) doubled, thereby ensuring the sneaking federalisation of a state subject. It is quite obvious as a natural rule.

The story is similar in agriculture. For the vast majority of India's farmers, the tiny size of their farms means that there is simply no way they can make a decent income on farming alone unless their incomes are artificially boosted by a plethora of input subsidies, price or income supports - or if they are part of the privileged few who have large farms.

The only viable long-term answer for the majority of India's farmers, as BR Ambedkar observed a century ago, is to get out of farming.

At that time, India's population was a fifth of what it is today, and land fragmentation correspondingly less. Public policies of input subsidies (especially on fertilisers and water) that reinforced the Green Revolution certainly benefited the country broadly, in terms of both aggregate outputs as well as farmer incomes. But their sell-by date is well-past. Once farm incomes rose, the rural surplus should have provided the springboard for structural transformation, especially in industry.

The basic thrust of the farm laws was in the right direction. But their specific details and how it was done without broad deliberation and building consensus has been completely self-defeating. A way out of this turmoil might lie in respecting India's federalism. The Centre should not pass farm laws that affect agriculture markets within states, but this should also mean no central government Minimum Support Price (MSP) and no central government procurement. The states say that agriculture is a state subject. It is. And they should have complete say in what subsidies they want to give

their farmers, for which crop, and how. The states that strongly believe in MSP and procurement should have complete ownership of both.

The Centre's involvement in procurement today is intimately linked to its obligations under the Right to Food Act. That Act had the right intentions but its cereal obsessiveness is having deeply damaging consequences for agriculture and agro-ecology. Crops, especially cereals, are lavished with subsidies while fisheries, livestock, and horticulture have grown much faster - and are more nutritious.

The Centre's involvement in agriculture markets should be to smoothen pan-India commerce - no state should be able to block the interstate movement of a commodity. For its part, the Centre should not ban agriculture exports if prices rise. Why should farmers not get the upside of prices when they have to suffer the downside when prices go down? If the government is worried about consumer reaction, it should either compensate farmers commensurately or subsidise the consumer directly, but not force the farmer to do so.

But all this cannot be done overnight. There needs

to be an exit ramp for farmers and states to adjust. Here, the Centre should provide a clear road map along with performance-based incentive financing to ease the transition over three to four years.

The farm laws are illustrative of an uncomfortable reality. There are many important issues that states are fully empowered to handle. But they don't. Problems arise. Then there is a clamour that "the government" should do more. But, inevitably, that means the central government. Of course, the Centre loves this, because it then exercises more power. And that has slowly, but surely, tilted the already imbalanced Union-state relationship even more in favour of the former.

The best bulwark against a hegemonic Centre is stronger federalism. But, for that to occur, states will have to up their game. Fundamentally, unless they bite the bullet and move to develop their non-farm sectors, most farmers will have increasingly precarious livelihoods. And the Centre can best help farmers by assisting states to make that transition.

## From Page-1

### State Elections...

in place in all the states. More than 18 crores are eligible to vote in these elections, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said.

This is the first major set of elections to be held in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic after the Bihar election. Poll officers will be vaccinated as frontline workers, said the Election Commissioner, adding that new rules for digital sites would be applied on social media. Polls will be held for 294 seats in West Bengal, 234 seats in Tamil Nadu, 140 seats in Kerala, 126 seats in Assam, and 30 seats in the Union Territory of Puducherry.

The Election Commission cited fear of violence while defending eight rounds and said: "We had an assessment of law and order on several factors. Last time it was seven phases so eight is not a big deal."

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lashed out at the Centre over the longest ever vote and said: "Why

is one district (24 Paraganas) voting in three rounds? Has this been done at the instance of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah? The daughter of Bengal has one thing to say. I will defeat all your conspiracies," she said.

Bengal is hurtling towards the most high-stakes battle of all with the two-time Chief Minister facing a tough challenge from the BJP. Her Trinamool Congress has been losing leaders - including her most trusted strategists -- to the BJP and the bleed hasn't stopped. She also accuses the BJP of using central agencies to hound her party men with multiple investigations.

In Kerala, it's an intense battle for the ruling Left-Led front and the Congress-led opposition coalition. The voters have alternated between the two in past state elections. The CPM hopes to continue its gains in the only state it rules after a victory in the recent local body elections.

### Why Petrol and diesel...

also facing supply issues. "OPEC and non-OPEC countries have hinted that supplies will continue to be affected till April," he said.

The third reason is an increase in demand for crude by many countries, affecting the prices inversely. Experts believe that there will be no relief in prices of petrol and diesel at least from the International market. Any relief is only possible when the state and Centre decide to cut tax in the domestic market.

Two poll-bound states, Assam and West Bengal have cut fuel prices by lowering the taxes that state governments levy on fuel prices. The Assam government has reduced the prices of petrol and diesel by ₹5 per liter. The West Bengal government on Sunday announced a reduction of tax by ₹1 per liter on petrol and diesel.

Recently in Parliament, the minister said that blaming the Centre for the price rise is wrong as states too have increased VAT on fuel.



# How Hinduism survived despite multiple invasions?



Sirish C Mohanty

Romans fell, Persia Fell, Arab Fell, Turk Fell, Greek Fell, and others fall but what is astonishing is that even after invasions, Indian culture is still alive unlike the rest of the nations in the world. Without giving excuses about how India was divided among kingdoms and empires and that they didn't have a better knowledge of technology and technique of warfare etc., let's look at Invasions and how they all fell and failed in India.

Within 30 years of its existence, Islam made a great achievement of defeating two major empires in the world, the Byzantine Empire in the west and the Sassanid Empire in the east. This is a mind-boggling achievement. By 650 AD Islam had arrived in modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, beyond this, they could not move for the next 350 years.

It is only later at the time of Mahmud of Ghazni in the early 11th century that Muslims started to move into current India. The actual Muslim Rule of India happens much later in 1192 when Muhammad Ghori defeats Prithviraj Chauhan in the second battle of Taraian.

So where nations after nations fell to Islam elsewhere in the world, Islam had to wait for centuries to make its way into India. So why curse forefathers for easily losing to Islam. The assumption that India was just sitting there ready to be conquered by

Muslims is incorrect. Muslims had to struggle for centuries and even then, they were never able to conquer the whole of India ever.

Whatever it was that Islam offered to people of other nations, it did not appeal to Indian forefathers. They can conclude this from the fact that force had to be used for conversion when Islam reached India. This clearly shows the strength of Indian culture.

Moreover, by the 1700s we see Sikhs, Marathas, and Jats rising to power and overthrowing the Muslims.

mechanisms like the first scientific census of 1871. And it was the British that used a "divide-and-rule" policy to drive apart religious communities, thereby promoting violence between them. The British policy of "divide-and-rule" brought colors at the time of their departure in 1947. With the independence, India and Pakistan are countries that were born through violence, and the belligerence continues till today. The partition of the Indian subcontinent witnessed hundreds of thousands of Hindus killed



invasion against the Hindu society continued in the form



During that century the European traders have started arriving in India and took advantage of the fight of the Sikh, Maratha, and Muslim powers for supremacy. The discovery of the sea route to India by Vasco da Gama made the process easier. Finally, in 1858 the British became the winner among the European powers and took control of the whole of India. The Modus Operandi of the British was shrewd and systematic, they didn't disturb the Indian rulers, rather concentrated on trade.

The negative legacy of British colonialism was more damaging to Indian society than the earlier invasions. It was the British that "constructed" modern Hindu and Muslim identities through

during riots, ethnic cleansings, and cross-border migrations.

To quell the growing violence between the Hindus and Muslims, the division of India was advocated which has exposed the machinations of the British colonial power in collaboration with their Indian sycophants proved wrong when we look at the horrible killings in then East Pakistan by the Pakistani Army and consequently with the Hindu majority India's military intervention that became an independent country in 1971.

The nationalist movement started by Netaji Subhas was crushed with the end of the second world war and the independence of the country. However, even after attaining independence, veiled

of use and abuse of secularism. The advocates of secularism sans awareness of its ethics leashed the society. The doctrine of appeasement grew



in Indian politics. The creation of vote bank politics through appeasement to Muslims began in vain to draw a sharp divide in Indian society. Since the 1980s, with the spectacular rise of Hindu nationalism, and Muslim radicalism riots have again become a recurring feature of Indian politics.

The 2014 outcome of the electoral results is certainly a milestone for Hindu society. Hindu Gods, the places of worship, sacred rivers, and temples began to be officially recognised. Earlier, government ministers used to fear visiting a place of worship in fear of losing his post in the name of secularism. Now there is competition among the

parties to pay a darshan before starting a political campaign. The repetition of the electoral results in 2019 further consolidated the revitalization of Hinduism with the theme "SabkasathsabkaVikash". Nevertheless, The veiled invasion is not yet over; it is active. It bamboozling the Indian society to attack in several forms like the CAA, award wapsi, intolerance, and the latest incarnation of the invasion is the mode of agitation against the farm laws and the violence at Lalquilla on the auspicious republic day. Interestingly, none of the preachers of secularism have denounced it. It exhibits- the invasion is not over and may take a long time for the conclusion.

Even after many centuries of oppression Indians still did not lose their faith. Now isn't that something to be proud of and yet some feel that their culture was weak and divided.

Instead of feeling the bitterness, Indians should appreciate that:

1. Great resistance was presented to an unstoppable force of Islam in India.

2. Even after many centuries of enslavement, and "divide-and-rule" Indian culture and identity survived and still stand firm and solidly grounded.



# India to enhance capabilities in defence manufacturing: PM

The prime minister listed a series of measures taken by his government to boost self-reliance in the defence sector



New Delhi: India had an age-old experience in making arms and military equipment

but after Independence, this capacity was not strengthened, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi said on Monday, asserting that now the country is committed to

enhancing its capabilities in defence manufacturing at a fast pace. Addressing a webinar on the effective implementation of the Union Budget's provisions in the defence sector, the prime minister listed a series of measures taken by his government to boost self-reliance in the defence sector.

"Before Independence, we used to have hundreds of ordnance factories. In both the World Wars, arms were exported from India on a large scale, but after Independence due to several reasons, this system was not strengthened as much as it should have," he

said.

"The condition is such that even for small arms we have to look at other nations. India is amongst the biggest defence importers and this is not a matter of pride," Modi stressed. He said it was not that the people of India do not have the talent or capability and pointed out that India did not make ventilators before the coronavirus period but now manufactures thousands of ventilators. "An India that could reach Mars, could have made modern weapons also but it became an easy way to import weapons from abroad," he said.

But now India is working hard to change the situation and India is committed to enhancing its capacities and capabilities at a fast pace, the prime minister asserted.

Modi said with initiatives like de-licensing, de-regulation, export promotion, foreign investment liberalisation, the government has taken several measures to give the defence manufacturing sector a boost.

He said with the establishment of the chief of defence staff post, bringing uniformity in the procurement process and induction of equipment has become easy.

## Crowd gathering doesn't lead to revocation of laws: Tomar

Gwalior : Tomar urged the agitating farm unions to tell the government which provisions in these new laws they find anti- farmers. Union minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday reiterated that the Centre was ready to talk to the farmers protesting against the new agriculture laws, and said that mere gathering of the crowd does not lead to revocation of legislations.



He urged the agitating farm unions to tell the government which provisions in these new laws they find anti-farmers. "Considering the issue with sensitivity, the government has held 12 rounds of talks with the farmer unions. But decisions based on talks could be taken when objections (over the new farm laws) are pointed out," the Agriculture Minister told reporters here when asked about the protest. The unions should tell as to what is anti-farmers

in the new laws, he added. "You flatly say revoke the laws. It doesn't happen that crowd gathers and the laws get revoked," he said. Farmer unions should tell the government what provisions are against the farmers. The government is ready to understand this and make amendments even today. The prime minister himself has said this, the minister added.

"Now, if the agitating unions are well-wishers of the farmers, then they

should make it clear which provisions are creating problems to them," he said.

Thousands of farmers have been protesting at Delhi's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh demanding the rollback of the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

## BJP sweeps Guj civic polls, AAP makes a stunning debut

AHMEDABAD, Feb 24: BJP swept all the six municipal corporations of Gujarat, putting up its best performance in two decades by winning 483 of the total 576 seats and leaving the main opposition Congress in tatters.

AAP made a stunning debut in the state by winning 27 of the total 120 seats in Surat, virtually stamping out Congress, and emerging as the main opposition party.

In Ahmedabad, another debutant, Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, made a memorable launch at Congress' cost, winning seven seats in minority-dominated areas that were all bastions of the latter.

AAP won from the Patel-dominated areas in Surat, signifying that Patidar quota stir leader Hardik Patel's entry into Congress has had little impact on the fortunes of the grand old

party. Of the 27 seats AAP won in Surat, 25 were held by Congress. It is all set to position itself as a formidable opposition party in Gujarat at a time when a weakened

Vijay Rupani's hometown Rajkot where it won 68 of the total 72 seats. In 2015, BJP had managed to win just 38.

BJP won 84% of the



Congress is fast losing both its leaders and support base.

BJP's stupendous win has ensured that four cities - Rajkot, Vadodara, Jamnagar, and Bhavnagar - will not have opposition as none of the rivals has won 10% of the total seats required to qualify for the opposition status. Of the remaining two corporations, Surat will have AAP as opposition and Ahmedabad will have Congress. The most decisive victory for BJP was in CM

total seats in these elections compared to the previous municipal polls held in 2015 when it bagged 68% of the seats.

The landslide is significant as Congress was banking on job losses and overall business gloom after the lockdown, besides the recent fuel price hike. The rout triggered a deluge of resignations of Congress leaders in the six cities, while angry workers vandalised its office in Surat.



# India To Ok 45 China Investments Including Great Wall Motors

About 150 investment proposals from China worth more than \$2 billion were stuck in the pipeline



New Delhi : India is set to clear 45 investment proposals from China, which are likely to include those from Great Wall Motor and SAIC Motor Corp, government and industry sources told Reuters, as military tensions ease at the border.

The proposals have been held up since last year after

India tightened controls on Chinese investment in the country in retaliation against Chinese troop incursions in the western Himalayan region. China blamed Indian troops for the standoff.

About 150 investment proposals from China worth more than \$2 billion were stuck in the pipeline. Companies from Japan and

the US routing investment through Hong Kong were also caught in the cross-fire as an inter-ministerial panel led by the interior ministry increased scrutiny of such proposals.

A Home Ministry spokesman did not respond to a request for comment on the proposals to be cleared.

Two government sources who have seen the list said

most of the 45 proposals set for early approvals are in the manufacturing sector, which is considered non-sensitive in terms of national security.

The sources did not elaborate but two other government officials and two industry sources who are privy to the process said proposals from Great Wall and SAIC are likely to be on the list.

Great Wall and General Motors (GM) made a joint proposal last year seeking consent for the Chinese automaker to purchase the US company's car plant in India, in a deal expected to be valued at around \$250-\$300 million.

Great Wall, which plans to invest \$1 billion in India over the next few years, said earlier that establishing operations in the country is a key part of its global strategy. It had planned to start selling

cars in India from this year and was also mulling bringing in electric vehicles.

Great Wall said it continues to seek relevant approvals and investment clearances. "Should we be granted all relevant approvals, we will push all work forward in India, abiding by the laws and rules laid down by the Indian government," a company spokesman said.

A GM spokesman added: "We continue to seek all relevant approvals to support the transaction."

SAIC, which started selling cars in India in 2019 under its British brand MG Motor, has invested around \$400 million of the nearly \$650 million it has committed to India and would need the approval to bring more investment.

SAIC's India unit did not respond to an email seeking

comment.

The change in the government's stance follows an improvement in the border situation. Troops who were in the eyeball to eyeball confrontation have been withdrawn, the two countries announced on Sunday.

The plan going forward is to split up over 150 proposed Chinese investments into three categories depending on the risk to national security, the sources said.

Sectors such as automobiles, electronics, chemicals, and textiles are seen as non-sensitive whereas those involving data and finance are deemed sensitive, consultants and lawyers have said. Proposals from non-sensitive sectors will be approved faster, while those seen as "sensitive" will be reviewed later, one of the government sources said.

Best Wishes from ::

**RADHE RADHE**



## OMC Starts Production Of Two Iron Ore Mines In Guali & Jilling-Langalota

Bhubaneswar : said that the production of these two mines would help stabilize the iron ore market. Highlighting the growth in the mining



Langalota on and metals industry Thursday. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi inaugurated the production work.

Inaugurating the event, Chief Minister



# 'Metro Man' E Sreedharan backs PM Modi, says 'it is now a fashion to oppose whatever BJP does'



New Delhi : It has become a fashion to oppose whatever the Modi government is doing, BJP-bound technocrat E Sreedharan said on Friday as he strongly supported the contentious new farm laws and asserted that there is no "intolerance" in the country.

He also said any attempt to malign the government before a foreign dispensation or medium can't be called "freedom of expression" as that would tantamount to "war against the establishment" and this

constitutional right has to be controlled if it is misused against our own country.

Hailing from Kerala, the 88-year-old technocrat said that he wants to do things for the benefit of the state and those can be done by entering politics. He said his main aim is to help the BJP come to power in Kerala where the assembly polls are due in April-May this year.

Sreedharan said that he has known Prime Minister Narendra Modi for several years. When Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, he

had worked on various projects in the state. "I know him (Modi) from very close quarters. He is very upright, corruption-free, committed, very passionate about the country's interests, very hardworking, and very forward-looking," he added.

In an interview, he said the debate on nationalism that is happening is unfortunate and that there are "so many petty parties" that are all against the BJP and a combined attack is going on against it for no reason.

"That is why all these things are happening. The government is so forward-looking and dynamic, If they join (support) the (central) government, things will be so different for India and the world.

"Unfortunately, some of our friends in opposite parties are working against

the interests of the country," he said. On the ongoing farmer protests against the Centre's new farm laws, Sreedharan opined that farmers might not have understood the benefits of these legislations.

When asked whether the protests could be seen as a kind of situation where it is about industry versus farmers, he replied in the negative and said, "It has nothing to do with the industry unless we are dragging industry into it."

"It is that either farmer has not understood or they don't want to understand for political reasons. It has become a fashion in this country that whatever the (central) government does, oppose it.... Anything that the government wants to do, there is an opposition, unfortunately," Sreedharan, better known as the 'Metroman', said.

He was instrumental in developing the Delhi Metro Rail project apart from various other infrastructure projects. Ruling out the possibility of him acting as a mediator between the central government and the protesting farmers, Sreedharan said the issues have to be sorted out by the government. "They have to educate the farmers and tell them that it is in their interest. If this is not done, what is going to happen to them. They (protesting farmers) don't realize what will happen five years down the line," he noted.

To a query on whether he is optimistic about a constructive solution to the ongoing protests which have been going on for a few months now, he said the protests are not being dragged on by farmers really but "dragged on by elements opposed to the central

government". About debates on nationalism and intolerance, Sreedharan wondered where is intolerance? and that all such things are only in talks. When asked about his views on the debate on freedom of expression, Sreedharan said it is a right in the Constitution but if the freedom of expression is misused against the country, then certainly that has to be controlled. "If you go to a foreign government or medium and complain about all sorts of things about the government and convince them that the government is wrong, then that is a wrong thing. This is not freedom of expression. This is sort of a war against the establishment, the government. This is how Hitler also started... Giving false opinion that this is freedom of expression and misled people," he said.

## China supports India hosting the BRICS 2021 summit

### India took over the BRICS leadership comes at a sensitive time as New Delhi's ties with Beijing are facing their worst challenges in decades.

Beijing : China on Monday said it supports India hosting this year's BRICS summit and will work with New Delhi to strengthen the bloc, allaying concerns that the India-China border dispute will impact the forum.

India assumed the rotating chairmanship of the five-member summit, comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa on January 1, taking over from Russia, which hosted the last summit as an online event in November because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

India taking over the BRICS leadership, for the third time since the group was formed, comes at a sensitive

time as New Delhi's ties with Beijing are facing their worst challenges in decades. It's only after nine months and several rounds of negotiations that border troops have disengaged from the south and north banks of Pangong Lake.

"We support India in hosting this year's meeting. We will work with it and other members to strengthen communication and dialogue and consolidate the three-pillar cooperation, expand BRICS plus cooperation and work for greater progress under BRICS," the foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said when asked whether the India-China border dispute will impact

BRICS.

The "three pillars" Wang referred to are policy and security; economy and finance; and culture and people-to-people exchanges.

China will "also help the world to defeat Covid-19, resume economic growth and improve global governance," Wang further added.

Wang said that BRICS is a cooperation mechanism of global influence consisting of emerging economies and developing countries which "in recent years it has seen greater solidarity, deeper practical cooperation, and a greater influence".

It is now a positive, stable, and constructive force

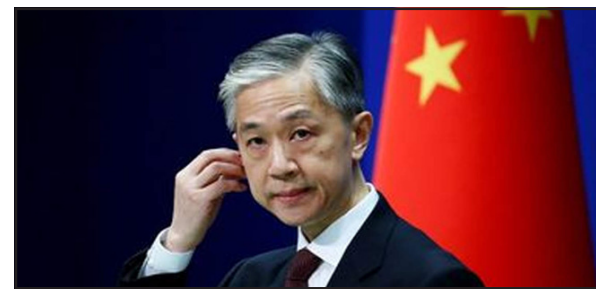
in international affairs," he said.

"China attaches importance to this mechanism, and we are committed to deepening strategic partnership within it to consolidate solidarity and cooperation," Wang said.

He did not respond to the question of whether President Xi Jinping will attend the BRICS summit in India.

In his address during the last summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India would focus on improving cooperation within the bloc.

"During our presidency in 2021, we will try enhancing intra-BRICS cooperation by strengthening all the three



pillars. We will endeavor to enhance intra-BRICS solidarity and develop a solid institutional framework for this purpose," Modi said.

In December, China complimented India for hosting the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in late November, saying all member

states spoke highly of the conference's outcomes. It was first-time India had hosted the SCO Council of Heads of Government after it joined the eight-member grouping in 2017. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Monday attended the virtual meeting of the bloc which was also addressed by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu.



# Biban arrested for gangrape that tolled the chair of a CM 22 years ago



**Bhubaneswar :** An unexpected encounter inside a jail, a crucial mistake spotted in records, an elaborate three-month intelligence operation in an Odisha village, suspicious bank transfers - and a last-minute escape bid.

These are the key turning points on the trail that led a police team from Bhubaneswar to Lonavala in Maharashtra last weekend and finally to the prime accused in a rape case that had rocked Odisha in 1999 and led to the resignation of then Chief Minister J B Patnaik.

On Monday, Odisha Police formally recorded the arrest of Bibekananda Biswal alias Biban, 50, in Bhubaneswar after bringing him from Aamby Valley where he was working as a plumber earning Rs 17,000 a month and holding an Aadhaar card in the name of "Jalandhar Swain".

"He was identified as Biban by multiple sources, including his family. Following identification, Biban was formally arrested and handed over to the CBI

for further investigation," said Dr Sudhanshu Sarangi, Police Commissioner, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack.

But not without a few last-minute jitters, said an officer in Lonavala. At the workers' barracks in Aamby Valley, Biban tried to mislead a joint police team, including officers from Maharashtra, by claiming that he did not have a cellphone, and pointed to the wrong bed fearing a search - when cornered, he even tried to flee. "He was immediately apprehended again," said the officer.

For nearly 22 years, there had been no leads in the case - the gangrape of an IFS officer's estranged wife in Cuttack's Baranga - after the CBI took over the investigation in 1999 following orders from the Orissa High Court. But just three months ago, the Bhubaneswar Police Commissionerate reopened the case following a "chance meeting" between Sarangi and a co-accused at Choudwar jail in Cuttack.

Sarangi had visited the jail

For nearly 22 years, there had been no leads in the case - the gangrape of an IFS officer's estranged wife in Cuttack's Baranga - after the CBI took over the investigation in 1999 following orders from the Orissa High Court.

last November as part of a probe into an armed dacoity of Rs 12 crore from IIFL, a leading non-banking finance company. "I wanted to show the inmates some pictures of the accused in the dacoity case from a CCTV camera. That was when I came across one of the co-accused in the 1999 rape case, Dharendra Mohanty. The jailer informed me that he was one of the oldest inmates, serving a life term. When we looked at the case file, we learned that the main accused was still absconding," Sarangi said.

That was the beginning of Operation Silent Viper, led by Sarangi and involving three other officers: Deputy Commissioner of Police, Cuttack; Special Squad Inspector, Cuttack; and Inspector In-charge, Baranga police station.

The case was particularly sensitive, police sources said, because of the impact it had on the state's politics at the time. The victim had accused Patnaik and former advocate general Indrajit Ray of having played a role in the incident

to intimidate her. Two years earlier, in July 1997, she had accused Ray of attempting to molest her and the Chief Minister of shielding him. In 2000, a CBI court sentenced Ray to three years rigorous imprisonment, charging him with attempted rape.

In the Baranga case, two of the accused, Mohanty and Pradip Sahu, were arrested 17 days after the incident while Biban managed to escape. In February last year, Sahu died while undergoing treatment for chest pain at a Bhubaneswar hospital. "In all the case documents, Biban was referred to as 'VK'. But while interacting with Dharendra during our meeting in jail, he informed us that it was actually 'BK' for Baranga King," Sarangi said.

That was the first break. The next step, an officer said, was to mobilise a network in Baranga, the area where Biban hails from, and gather information discreetly about his family. "We suspected that the family could have been in touch with him," another officer said. Soon, the police

came to know that Biban's wife was trying to sell a piece of land that belonged to him and had applied for a death certificate to facilitate the sale. And, a closer look at the family's finances led them to believe that they had access to another source of income.

"Biban has a wife and two sons, with the elder son married. We learned that none of the sons had a regular source of income or job and yet, there was a constant flow of financial support. This strengthened our suspicion that the family was in touch with Biban," Sarangi said.

The team then zeroed in on the family's bank details and found cash transfers of amounts ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 25,000 to the account of Biban's elder son.

"We activated a network in Pune to learn more about Swain. As per his Aadhaar card, he was a native of Naranpur village in Baranga, which is where Biban's home is located. It identified his father's name as 'P Swain', and the initial matched the name of Biban's father, Purnanda Biswal. Finally, we confirmed that there was no person named Jalandhar Swain in the village," an officer said. On Friday, a three-member team from Odisha reached Mumbai, and a joint coordination meeting was held at the regional office of Pune Rural police in Lonavala. "We provided them local support

and information," said DySP Lonavala, Navneet Kanwat.

Dressed in plainclothes, the joint team reached Aamby Valley on Saturday and found the name "Jalandhar Swain" after a three-hour search of employee records. They took the help of another worker from Odisha to locate the barracks where they found Biban and started questioning him.

"We said it was a routine procedure and asked for his phone. He said he did not have one. When we asked him to point to his bed, he pointed to the wrong one where we found a phone that was not working. Then, we asked another employee to call his number and found the phone ringing from another bed. We brought him to a company office around the evening. While the team was preparing to leave, he tried to run out of the room," said an officer.

Workers at the site described Biban as a "secretive person" who "avoided being photographed" and "changed his appearance at least twice". "Once he grew his hair and kept a beard. Another time, he kept short hair and was clean-shaven," said a worker.

Supervisors said workers from Odisha started coming to the site in groups about 10-12 years ago. "He (Biban) used to work earlier on general maintenance jobs. He took up plumbing around six years ago," said a worker.

## Odisha's "Looteri Dulhan" arrested for marrying and duping multiple men

**Bhawanipatna :** A 32-year-old woman of Odisha's Sundargarh district has been arrested by police in Kalahandi district on charges of marrying multiple men and duping them.

Kalahandi superintendent of police Dr Vivek M Saravana said the police arrested Elee Mahanta of Sundargarh district following complaints that she married at least three men after the death of her husband.

"She assumed multiple names after the death of her husband Kumudbandhu Patel in 2011. She then

prepared an Aadhaar card in the name of Sindhumati Munda in September 2013 and married a person named Rajendra Das the same month. After the marriage, she visited her relatives at village Sarangarh of Chhatisgarh where she met a 51-year-old woman named Manju alias Mina Gupta who taught her how to cheat people in the name of marriage," said Saravana.

A few years later, she divorced Das and got a new Aadhaar card in the name of Elee Mahanta in May 2018. She again married another person.

In June 2020, she again got a new Aadhaar card made in the name of Mamata Agarwal and married a man called Bikash Jain of Kalahandi district in October. "Her associate, Birbal Sharma, played the role of a mediator in the marriage and took 24 lakh from Bikash's family members as his mediation fees. The gang also arranged a visit of the groom's family to Sundargarh and made it look like as if she belonged to some Marwari family," said the SP.

Police said the modus operandi of the gang was to

target elderly or divorced men. "While Elee used to be the prospective bride, the three others used to act as her mother, father, and uncle. They used to share the loot. When we raided the place, we found all of them there," said the SP.

The investigating officer of the case, Binita Toppo, said from the preliminary investigation it has been found that the woman married four times. "We suspect the number may rise further. Many people, who were cheated by them, are not approaching us fearing social stigma. We urge them

to register a complaint," said Toppo.

Apart from Mahant, others who were arrested include Birbal Sharma (60), Manju alias Mina Gupta (51), and Sraban Soni (36).

Police officials said the case seemed to be straight out of Sonam Kapoor-starrer 2015 Bollywood movie 'Doli ki Doli' wherein Dolly, a young con artist, marries men from different religions and runs away with their wealth on



the night of the wedding. Her entire family consisted of con artists. After conning several rich men, she gets media attention and labels her as "Looteri Dulhan".



# The BJP's game plan to breach Congress citadel in Puducherry

Puducherry, Feb 23: On Monday, the V Narayanasamy government in Puducherry, the only Congress government in the South, lost power following a spate of resignations of party MLAs over the past month. Before tendering his resignation, Narayanasamy blamed the fall of his government on the games played by the BJP.

But what does the BJP stand to gain in a Union Territory where it is yet to establish deep roots and has only three nominated MLAs in the Assembly?

And why has the BJP, which is in alliance with the N R Congress and the AIADMK, allowed this drama to unfold almost on the eve of scheduled Assembly elections?

Sources in the BJP say the party has reasons to be pleased about the developments in Puducherry.

FIRST, the BJP, which



had declared its intentions of having a Congress-mukt Bharat when it came to power, has been on a mission to show the Congress and its leadership in a poor light as possible.

The opposition party's losses - be it in Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Manipur, or Arunachal Pradesh - has reinforced the image of the Congress as a "party that cannot rule or hold its people together", and that "its ideology is no

longer relevant for the country", BJP leaders said.

"What happened in Puducherry is just an add-on. Not that the BJP is going to form a government immediately, but it just reinforced the national narrative the BJP has been building," said a senior BJP leader who is familiar with the party's functioning in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. "Since it happened just ahead of the Assembly election, no one can say that the BJP was hungry for power. Rather, the focus will be on the

Congress's failure, and its leadership's inability to retain power," the leader added.

SECOND, according to this leader, "whatever be the outcome of the elections, it will be a gain for the BJP". Of the five MLAs who resigned from the Congress, three have already joined the BJP. Others are also expected to follow, or they could contest as Independents, party sources said.

"This will further weaken the Congress in the state, and it might strengthen its ally DMK as well. It makes the chances of a Congress government bleak," said a source.

THIRD, BJP leaders said the party had been in touch with the disgruntled Congress MLAs for long - as the Narayanasamy government weakened, and the Congress leadership failed to intervene in Puducherry. They could have brought down the

government at any time, claimed a BJP leader - however, the move was finally made on the eve of elections so that the rebels could keep their supporters enthused as they contested again.

"When a rebellion happens just ahead of elections, capitalising on the angst is easier," a BJP leader said.

A Namassivayan, who resigned as PWD Minister and joined the BJP, has considerable political influence in his Villianur constituency and surrounding areas. Such leaders can draw votes for the BJP in their areas, party leaders said.

FOURTH, BJP leaders said any move to destabilise the Congress government while Kiran Bedi was Lieutenant Governor could have hurt the image of both the BJP and the central government, due to the long-

drawn-out battle between her and Chief Minister Narayanasamy.

"By removing Bedi from the post, we have controlled the damage. If this had happened while Bedi was there, the party and the central government would have been blamed," a BJP office-bearer said.

FIFTH, it isn't just Bedi's removal - her replacement too, was part of the BJP's plan, according to party leaders. Making Tamilisai Soundararajan L-G has not only helped the party avoid criticism but having a Tamilian in the post is also expected to boost the BJP in terms of perception.

BJP leaders, however, conceded that efforts to put together a new government at this stage could create sympathy for Narayanasamy. The party remains undecided over the N R Congress demand for a new government in the state.

## Lemongrass Processing Unit Inaugurated At Sorisapadar



Rayagada : A lemongrass oil extraction unit was jointly inaugurated by Mr. MazharBeig, Unit Head, Utkal Alumina International Ltd. along with Mr. Patitapabana Samantaray, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Rayagada on 24th February 2021 at Sorisapadar village in Rayagada district.

Utkal Alumina International Limited a unit of Hindalco Industries of

Aditya Birla Group under its CSR initiatives has promoted this unit and extended support to a local entrepreneur cum farmer Gauranga Bisoi to set up this enterprise. Under Project Sugandha UAIL in collaboration with the Horticulture Department of Rayagada District Administration, has been promoting lemongrass cultivation along with the establishment of lemongrass oil extraction

plants in its peripheral villages for the last three years. As of now, more than 160 acres of land has been covered under lemongrass cultivation by 111 farmers in sixteen different villages of both Mines and Refinery periphery along with the establishment of two units at Jogiparitunda and Sorisapadar villages. This year it has been planned to expand this activity to another 200 acres along with the establishment of two more extraction units.

Speaking on the occasion Mr. Beig, Unit Head of UAIL appreciated the joint effort made by the company and the Horticulture Department in promoting sustainable livelihood for the farmers and assured such kind of support from UAIL in the days to come. Mr. Samantaray, DDH, Rayagada applauded the efforts made by Utkal Alumina in promoting this cash crop for the enhanced income of the farmers.

## Non-Resident Odia Bhawan Inaugurated in Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Around one and a half crore Odias residing outside Odisha in different metropolitan cities of India, other states, and abroad can contribute a lot for the overall development of their mother state, opined distinguished dignitaries on the inaugural event. The Guest speakers who attended the inaugural Ceremony of Non-Resident Odia Bhawan at Unit - 2 here expressed strong confidence that this Bhawan will play a vital role in establishing and maintaining the social, cultural, and emotional relationship between Odisha and non - resident Odias. Attending the function as Chief Guest, the State Higher Education Minister Dr. Arun Sahoo gave a clarion call to NROs to extend active co-operation, support, and help for the social, economic, and intellectual growth of

Odisha. The Bhawan shall function as a transit home for the NRO's coming from outside and will cater to their logistic need and service in the state capital, hoped Dr. Sahoo. Guest of honor in the meeting state rural development and Labour Minister Sushant Singh

interest of their mother state and to ensure Odisha's all-around wellbeing. Organised by the Management Institution of the Bhawan, Delhi based Odia Mahamanch, the ceremony was attended by well-known personalities. The entire program was well



wished fast progress of the NRO's Bhawan. Addressing the gathering, Chairman of World Odisha Society Kishore Dwivedi appealed to Odias across the Globe to stand strong and united for the protection of the larger

organised and successfully executed by the Two Directors of Odia Mahamanch Gobardhan Dhal, Manoj Nayak as well as Convenor of Mother Tongue Movement Pabitra Maharatha.



# Toll collection reaches Rs.102 crores, on the first day of mandatory FASTag

FASTag is an electronic toll payment system that has been implemented across the national highways in the country since February 16.

New Delhi : The countywide rollout of FASTags to encourage digital payments at toll plazas has reached 23.2 per cent, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) announced on Saturday. In a tweet, the NHAI said that the total number of the transaction has crossed 63 lakh. It also said that toll collection through FASTag has reached ₹102 crores per day. Toll collection through FASTag sees a jump of 23.2% in just 4 days crossing the ₹100 Cr mark on 19th Feb. Total no. of transaction crosses 63 lacks.

To facilitate the adoption

of FASTag, the NHAI has also launched a 'Free FASTag' campaign till March 1 by waiving the tag cost of ₹100 at over 770 toll plazas. FASTag is an electronic toll payment system that has been implemented across the national highways in the country since February 16. The system works through a unique code for every vehicle enabling digital payment of the toll tax when the vehicle crosses the sensors attached at the toll plazas.

The ministry of road and surface transport issued a notification which said that




any vehicle not fitted with FASTag or vehicle without valid, functional FASTag will pay a fee equivalent to two times the fee applicable to that category. In five days since its implementation, the 100 per cent cashless tolling at national highways has been positively received by commuters, the NHAI said. The government

body has also added a new feature called 'Check Balance Status' in the 'My FASTag App' which can be downloaded from Google Play and Apple's app stores. "The My FASTag App will show FASTag wallet balance status in form of color codes i.e. Green for Active tag with sufficient balance, Orange/

Amber for tags with a low balance, and Red for Blacklisted tags," an NHAI statement said. After the mandatory FASTag, the toll collection has reached ₹102 crores per day, which means the annual collection would be over ₹36500 crores per year. In the year 2018-19, the total annual collection was ₹24,396 crores. The amount of user fee collected from fee plazas of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in Financial Year (FY) 2018-19 is ₹24,396.19 crore with an average monthly and per day collection of Rs 2033 crore and Rs 66.84 crore

respectively. It shows that in some way or other huge amount of money collected as toll was being siphoned off which needs a probe.

In the case of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) highways, after completion of the concession period, the user fee is to be collected by Central Government at reduced rates of 40 per cent. In the case of a public-funded project, the user fee rates are to be reduced to 40% after recovery of the capital cost of the project. Hence, with the introduction of FASTag, the recovery period of the capital will be shorter. 

## From Page-1

### New guidelines...

for grievance redressal "If there are complaints against the dignity of users, particularly women - expose private parts of individuals or nudity or sexual act or impersonation, etc - you'll be required to remove that within 24 hrs after a complaint made. This is designed to respect the dignity of women," said Ravi Shankar Prasad

"The laws made for significant social media will be implemented within 3 months so that they can improve their mechanism. The rest will come into effect from the day the rules are notified"

During his address, Prasad said that every social media platform was "welcome" in India but added that there should not be "double standards"

"If an attack takes place on Capitol Hill, then SM supports police action but if there's an aggressive attack on Red Fort, then you've double standards. This is not acceptable," he said.

He also said that social media platforms should have provision for a "voluntary verification mechanism of the users"

'3-stair mechanism for OTT platforms'

I&B Minister Prakash Javadekar spoke about the mechanism for OTT platforms.

"We have decided to have a 3-stair mechanism for OTT platforms. OTT and digital news media will have to disclose their details. We are not mandating registration, we are seeking information," he said

"There should be a grievance redressal system in OTT platforms and digital portals. OTT platforms will have to have a self-regulating body, headed by retired Supreme Court or High Court judge or very eminent person in this category"

Javadekar made a case for self-classification of content on OTT platforms

"For OTT, there should be self-classification of content -- 13+, 16+ and A categories. There has to be a mechanism of parental lock and ensuring compliance that children don't see that," he said.

### State Budget...

sticking to the FRBM norms, when job losses are high and contraction is ruling the State economy, the shocker delivered by the budget is a massive cut of Rs 725 crore has been effected in the all-important growth chip -the capital outlay.

Another thumb down in the budget has been a meager rise in program expenditure by Rs 1000 crore to a total of Rs 75,000 crore. In contrast, the administrative expenditure clocked a whopping 30 per cent to touch Rs 85,000 crore in 2021-22.

#### Why The FM Remained Stuck To FRBM?

- A detailed glance at the budget document reveals the compulsion behind FM Niranjan Pujari faithfully sticking to the FRBM virtue.
- When the State's revenue is projected to touch Rs 57,500 crore, the Central transfer and grants amount to Rs 68,100 crore in 2021-22.
- Since the own revenue source for the State is very limited, to spend big, Odisha has to borrow more.
- The gross borrowings for the State have grown 61 per cent to touch Rs 43,986 crore. The debt stock of Odisha is estimated at 20.9 per cent of the GSDP. The FRBM has mandated that debt stock should be within 25 per cent of GSDP.
- The gross borrowings are projected to remain at around Rs 43,861 crore even by the end of the fiscal year 2023-24.
- The Budget estimates for the year 2021-22 show that State's tax revenue will be Rs 37,500cr against the BE of Rs 38,350 cr in 2020-21.
- It is this ballooning of borrowing that has forced the State FM to adopt the FRBM virtue.
- The projection of a revenue surplus of Rs 6,032 cr for the fiscal year 2021-22 has been accomplished by a cut on the expenditure side.

#### SOCIAL ALLOCATIONS

- As predicted the Health allocations are up at Rs 9,164 crore against last year's 7,700 crores.
- Drinking-Water, Education, and other vital social sector have also received higher allocations in the budget.



# Kashmir Ki Kali Once Again?



The government is luring Bollywood to come to Kashmir to make magic. But will filmmakers take the chance?

A 24-member delegation of Bollywood producers touring the valley feel it has the potential of becoming an international film destination. Bollywood is setting its eyes on Kashmir again, the go-to place for filmmakers in the 60's and the 70's. A 24-member delegation of Bollywood producers touring the valley feels it has the potential of becoming an international film destination if the infrastructure can be put in

place.

Members of the delegation visited Gulmarg and Srinagar to explore the locations for

film shooting, trying to revive the old bond the industry had with the state. Film producer Aashish Singh told

reporters that the Valley provides a perfect backdrop for the filmmakers and has the potential of becoming the shooting destination for the world. He has already shot movies like Jab Tak Hai Jaan in Kashmir.

CEO of Producers Guild Nitin Ahuja and Devgan Production's Meena Ayer said Kashmir has a huge scope for film tourism that needs to be tapped.

promoted for food tourism. He said Kashmir is among the top three exotic food destinations in India. "I have tasted Kashmiri food and will promote it throughout the world. There is a need of having a national campaign to promote Kashmir's cuisine," he said.

According to the government spokesman many production houses have expressed their desire

sequences where the hero and heroine would run around trees. "Even if there are romantic songs in some films to be shot around beautiful locales, there are many choices apart from Kashmir," said one of the producers who didn't want to be named.

Some of the recent Kashmir-based films have failed at the box office, like the much-hyped Vidhu



The host of the cookery show 'KhanaKhazana' Sanjeev Kapoor said Kashmir can also be

to shoot here. In a video conference, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor Niteshwar Kumar assured the visiting delegations that the J & K government would provide all support and facilities for their upcoming films. He said the government is also making a policy that will encourage filmmakers to shoot in Kashmir.

However, some of the producers were wary if Kashmir can go back to its glory days of film shooting. Firstly, today's films have moved away from the routine song-and-dance

Vinod Chopra film Shikara, he added. He says Srinagar, a city of over 16 lakh people has no quality infrastructure. "Everything shuts after 5 pm. There is no public transport. The lighting around Dal Lake is such that you cannot even walk on the pavement. And above all there is the problem of militancy," he says. The state government is giving as much push it can to lure filmmakers to shoot in Kashmir. It is up to them now to come with creative ideas to use the breathtaking locations in their movies.



**Editor : Sirish C Mohanty**

**Our correspondents at**

*New Delhi, Rourkela, Jaipur, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bolangir, Baripada, Dhenkanal, Bhadrak, Talcher, Nayagarh, Keonjhar, Joda, Sundargarh, Rayagada, Nabarangapur, Jeypore, Phulbani, Nuapara*

**Editorial office**

LIG 491, Neeladri Vihar PH II, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar 751021, R.O: Uplands, Banspani, Joda 758034, Odisha  
Editorial: 9437072248, Circulation and subscription: 9938229429  
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