

# Naveen Patnaik gets resolved 16 major decisions in the cabinet



According to a press release, the decision was taken in the Cabinet meeting held under the

chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Bhubaneswar, March 7: The State Cabinet meeting

held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday have resolved 16 major decisions adding the approval of a proposal to create a new department called Mission Shakti in a bid to strengthen the SHG (Self Help Group) movement across the state. According to a press release, the decision was taken in the Cabinet meeting held under the

chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. The cabinet has resolved 16 major decisions including the decisions on the departments of Energy, Agriculture, and Farmer's Welfare, Social security, and empowerment of persons with a disability, Excise, General administration and public grievance, Panchayati Raj and drinking water,

Revenue and disaster management, and Steel and mines. The major decisions include the creation of a new department named Mission Shakti; construction of ten mega rural pipe water supply schemes in Aul, Rajkanika, Chilika, Tangi, Banpur, Khordha, Jatani, Gondia, Bhubana, Golaminda, Jajpur, and Binjharpur blocks.

The constitution of the rural piped water scheme for 26 Gram Panchayats of Sambalpur district and 2 Gram Panchayats of Jharsuguda district has also been sanctioned in the cabinet. Besides, the cabinet has sanctioned the lease of 25 acres of land for the construction of one satellite center of AIIMS in Remuna Tehsil of Balasore district, the release reads.

**'Mamata should stick to reciting kalma': BJP claims Bengal CM wrongly chanted Chandi Path**

## Reciting Chandi's path is no ordinary job, only experts can do it

Nandigram : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has claimed that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrongly chanted the Chandi Path at a rally in Nandigram on Tuesday. The party's West Bengal unit tweeted a video of Mamata's Chandi Path at a rally and coupled it with another video of Chandi Path which is claimed to be the correct verse.



The saffron party suggested that Mamata should stick to reciting kalma and not pretend to be a Hindu. "It is too late now to wash the sins of brazen minority appeasement of last 10 years," the tweet reads. Earlier on Tuesday, Mamata arrived in

Nandigram on a two-day visit. Addressing the party workers, the TMC supremo proudly exclaimed that she is "a Hindu girl" and recited mantras from the Chandi Path. "I am a born Hindu. No one should question my identity. But I don't believe

in dividing communities into religious lines. If anyone has any doubt about my religion, I challenge them to a debate and competition on reciting Hindu shlokas. Khela Hobe (the game is on)," she said and then recited shlokas. TMC turncoat (Page-14)

## LPG price double in 7 years, tax collection on petrol-diesel jumps 459%: Dharmendra Pradhan

New Delhi : Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Monday that taxes on petrol and diesel has swelled collections by over 459%. This comes at a time when there has been a sharp increase in prices of domestic cooking gas, LPG

Answering questions on rising fuel prices, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in Lok Sabha said that the retail selling price of domestic gas was Rs 410.5 per 14.2-kg cylinder on March 1, 2014. This month, the same cylinder costs now Rs 819. Pradhan further stated that the price of domestic subsidised LPG has been raised during the last few months from Rs 594 per cylinder in December 2020 to Rs 819 now.

Giving the example of



kerosene, Oil Minister said that kerosene sold through the public distribution system (PDS) has risen from Rs 14.96 per liter in March 2014 to Rs 35.35 this month. Small price hikes over the past couple of years have eliminated subsidies on cooking gas as well as PDS kerosene. The rates, which vary from state to state depending on local sales tax (VAT), are currently at Rs 91.17 a liter

for petrol and Rs 81.47 for diesel in Delhi. Petrol and diesel prices to are at an all-time high across the country. Pradhan said the central government's total excise collection from petrol, diesel, ATF, natural gas, and crude oil has increased from Rs 2.37 lakh crore in 2016-17 to Rs 3.01 lakh crore during April-January 2020-21. Between November (Page-14)



# Odisha CM nominates senior officers to monitor development works in 10 districts



Bhubaneswar, March 2: The Planning and Convergence department issued a notification on Monday and nominated the officers to supervise

welfare programs in 10 aspirational districts of the state for three months starting from April 1, he said.

The Odisha

government has nominated 10 senior officers as secretaries-in-charge of backward districts to oversee development works there, an official said on Tuesday.

The Planning and Convergence department issued a notification on Monday and nominated the officers to supervise welfare programs in 10 aspirational districts of the state for three months

starting from April 1, he said.

They will monitor 49 key performance indicators in five sectors health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resource, basic infrastructure, financial inclusion, and skill development in the backward areas under the Centre's Transformation of Aspirational Districts' program, the official said.

The officers were

asked to visit the 10 districts - Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Bolangir, Koraput, Dhenkanal, Nuapada, Gajapati, Malkangiri, and Nabarangpur - and submit their reports to a state-level committee for monitoring of action plan under the scheme.

The Centre's program aims at raising the living standards of people in the aspirational districts and ensuring inclusive

growth for all.

Meanwhile, the Centre has also appointed officers who have been visiting these districts and submitting their reports to the NITI Aayog.

The senior officers nominated by the state will coordinate with the central government employees who are given charges for these backward districts, the official added.

## IPS Vacancies In Odisha Grow Bigger, State 2nd In Country

Bhubaneswar : With the allotment of mere 2 IPS to Odisha cadre in 2019, the vacancies at the level of IPS in the State have risen to 72 by the end of last year, when the grim fact is Odisha has the 2nd largest IPS vacancies in the country.

The vacancy rate in 2020, however, had eased marginally to around 37 percent from around 38 percent in the year 2019.

As per the data shared by Union Home Ministry in the Lok Sabha today, the sanctioned cadre strength for the State stood at 195, the men-in-position stood at 123. In absolute number, the total IPS vacancies in the State rose to 72 vis-a-vis around 71 in 2019.

Data shows increased intake of IPS officers over the years in the State as the sanctioned IPS cadre



**IPS vacancies are not because the direct IPS recruit size in Odisha has fallen, but for non-filing of the promotion quota to IPS cadre from the State police services**

strength for Odisha was 188 till 2019 as against 195 in 2020. In the last three years, the Union Home Ministry had allotted 10 IPS recruits to the Odisha cadre.

By the year 2022, the present in-position IPS strength In Odisha

would shrink to around 113, as the State will see as many as 10 retirements, informed highly placed sources in the State home department.

Odisha becoming the second State in the country concerning IPS

vacancies is not because the direct IPS recruit size in Odisha over the years has fallen, but for non-filing of the promotion quota to IPS cadre from the State police services.

As per sources, the promotion-quota vacancies had increased to 57 vis-a-vis of 48 in 2010. The rise in vacancies has been attributed to the non-availability of appropriate officers at the DSP level in Odisha for graduating to the IPS cadre.

A DSP level officer should have a minimum stint of 8-years in the rank to become eligible to graduate to the IPS rank. For nearly a decade

Odisha government has stopped direct recruitment to DSPs. As a consequence, an inspector-level official had to wait for getting promoted to DSP rank.

## Bride suffers cardiac arrest due to excessive crying, dies

**The girl was under a lot of stress as she had lost her father a few months ago, a local said.**

Sonepur : A newly-wed bride in the western Odisha district of Sonepur died of cardiac arrest as she continued to cry during her 'bidaai' while she was leaving for her in-laws.



On Thursday evening, Gupteswari Sahoo of Julunda village in Binika village of Sonepur district tied the knot with Bisikesan Pradhan of Bolangir district. On Friday morning, when the family members of the newly-wed bride were preparing to send her off to her in-laws, she started crying and suddenly fainted.

She was rushed to Dunguripallu Community Health Centre (CHC) where doctors declared her brought dead. The doctors later confirmed that she had died due to cardiac failure.

"She kept on crying while being sent off. We knew that she was under a lot of stress as she had lost her father a few months ago. Her maternal uncle and others were organising the marriage. We did not expect her to die in such a way," said a villager, Ramesh Sahu. "She was a sweet girl," he added.

A doctor at the CHC said cardiac arrests can happen due to emotionally stressful events which may lead to curbing of the heart's ability to pump effectively.

# Price roller coaster hiccup calls for national review



**Prof. Shivaji Sarkar**  
Former HOD in English journalism in IIMC, Delhi

India is on a galloping price roller coaster that has become a silent killer of the economy forcing the country's way into a virtual policy vacuum even as general apathy is palpable in an election year.

It is impacting the cost of production and prices of different commodities though the producers are aware that each hike has an impact on consumption in an economy that has gone into recession with high job losses. Governor of RBI Shaktikant Das says, "Enabling a calibrated unwinding of high indirect taxes on petrol and diesel - in a coordinated manner by center and states - are critical to contain the further build-up of cost-pressures in the economy," according to the minutes of the latest

monetary policy meeting.

The strangest phenomenon is except for the petrol price hike no voice is raised for a phenomenon that is thawing the economy. Or is the silent killer working through the minds and may have a volatile expression in the polls for four states and a union territory? It is difficult to fathom but rural distress is being felt among the poorest of the poor Ujjwala beneficiaries across the country. Except for about 30 to 35 percent of Ujjwala gas recipients, a second refill is rare as LPG prices shoot up from Rs 575 in February 2016 to Rs 794 in February 2021, according to Indian Oil. It hits the rural women, who largely again are using smoke-spewing wood or charcoal, that Ujjwala aimed at banishing.

A policy change is necessary because high petrol price at over Rs 91 (touching Rs 100 also at many places) and diesel Rs 82 in most places for central and state governments trying to sustain out of high excise duties, VAT and cesses on the basic price of around Rs 30. The benefit of the lowest crude prices of \$ 19 a barrel during the 2020 lockdown was never passed on to the consumers.

Despite crude prices rising since the opening of the lockdown, the prices are far lower than some years ago when the absolute peak occurred in June 2008 at \$ 148.93 a barrel or near \$ 120 in 2012-13. In February 2021, the OPEC basket stood at \$ 59.58 and Brent crude at \$ 57.97. Brent crude reached \$ 50 in December 2020.

Ideally, the benefits should have been passed on to the recession hit, job-losing consumers. It could have been a sigh of relief. The high taxes on fuel have hit every individual, business, and agriculture. Diesel prices in India were kept low for its low production cost as also because it is a bellwether for the economy. The concept was to keep inflation low and help people in every aspect of life grow without any subsidy. The present pricing policy needs to be changed for faster growth and ease of life.

As per an RBI report of February 2021, every \$ 10 a barrel increase in

crude prices leads to an additional \$ 12.5 billion deficit, roughly 43 basis points of Indian GDP. So expecting the government to pass on the entire benefit of low prices may not be the rationale. But what is being dumped on

that eight core industries' output could rise by a mere 0.1 percent in January 2021. Except for fertilizer, steel, and electricity, the rest - coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, and cement recorded negative growth.

Unwise decisions are making electioneering an expensive proposition, particularly for smaller parties though even larger parties supposedly flush with cash also get the jitters. Why not? Every party ferries crowd

**Diesel prices in India were kept low for its low production cost as also because it is the bellwether for the economy. The concept was to keep inflation low and help people in every aspect of life grow without any subsidy or burden on the government.**

the consumers is far more than they can bear. A policy standard for linking the consumer prices to the bulk crude prices is required to stop the bleeding of the entire economy, including its base agriculture.

The fiscal deficit is rising and is likely to touch \$ 18.48 lakh crore for a total 2021-22 budget of Rs 34.83 lakh crore or 9.5 percent of the GDP. In reality, it would be a borrower's economy. The fiscal deficit had breached the annual target in July 2020. It had soared to a seven-year high of 4.6 percent of GDP in 2019-20.

This calls for a national deliberation. It has become a politically scoring point but no discussion takes place on how the nation could bridge the expenditure and revenue earning gap. The high development expenses on roads, hydel or thermal power projects, or race for arms industry are not trickling down.

The discussion is needed also for the reason

The core sectors had expanded by 2.2 percent in January 2020. The anemic growth in the core also reflects that physical production has declined by 8.8 percent for the year.

There is a linkage to the core sector growth and prices. Inflationary pressures reduce the purchasing capacity of the people causing a severe demand slump. It calls for prudent economic measures right from reducing fuel price burden on the consumers to resorting back to low diesel prices, often being opposed by ecologists supported by global petro giants for boosting their sales.

They want to do away with diesel so that a country like India increases its oil purchase by three times. The nation cannot afford such luxury. India has to set its swadeshi atmanirbhar course for helping its economic boom.

It also has to make its electioneering affordable for the average person.

to meets of their top leaders and transportation costs have shot up. Truck rentals have gone up 10-12 percent, as fuel consists 45 percent of its operational cost. The cost of raw material and packaging is increasing. The food and vegetable transportation cost rises by Re 1 a kg, jet fuel prices, 40 percent of airlines' costs, have surged by about 50 percent per kl in seven months to January. Even online food firm Swiggy or Zomato are hiking payments to absorb the increased cost of fuel.

After the spectrum sale at Rs 77147 crore, phone connectivity will also be expensive adding to the prices in every segment. The prices are a priority issue. It has hit the rupee too. A review of the policies is needed to lead the country to the goals of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's \$ 5 trillion economies. But a high-cost economy could be a hiccup. 🚗



## NITR Organised International Conference on Mathematics

Rourkela : National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela added one more feather to its cap when its Mathematics department organised a first-of-its-kind international conference on 'Applied analysis computation and mathematical modeling in Engineering (AACMME)'.

The three-day conference was organized virtually from 24 to-26 February. Eminent professors from different parts of the world took part in the conference.

Prof. Rajiv Sekhar, Director IIT(ISM) Dhanbad, and Prof. Dr Nikolai Leonenko from Cardiff University, UK, were the chief guests of the virtual conference. The primary motto of this program was to bring together leading academic scientists, leading engineers, researchers, and scholars to exchange their experiences and research results about all aspects of mathematical sciences. "Mathematics plays a great role in applications in particular in engineering. We cannot imagine our life without Mathematics," Chief guest Prof. Leonenko said during his speech.

Prof. Rajiv Sekhar mentioned that as an

engineer, "our main job is to take technology from the lab to industrial scale and that is where mathematical modeling and numerical computation plays a very significant role."

The Director & Program patron of the conference, Prof. Animesh Biswas on the occasion said "the main objective of this conference is to promote mathematical research and to focus the recent advances in mathematical sciences along with its applications in science and technology.

Many keynote speakers from all over the international universities became a part of it and contributed to its successful conduction by sharing the knowledge. Prof. Nikolai Leonenko (Cardiff University, Wales, UK), Prof. Karniadikas (Brown University, USA), Prof. A. K. Nandakumaran (IISc Bangalore) and Prof. Subenoy Chakraborty (Dean of Science, Jadavpur University), Prof. J.A. Tenreiro Machado (Institute of Engineering, Polytechnic of Porto, Portugal), Prof. Carlo Cattani (universitadella Tuscia, Italy), Prof. Dumitru Baleanu (Cankaya University, Ankara, Turkey), Prof. Palle

Jorgensen (University of Iowa), Prof. Adem Kilicman (Universiti Putra Malaysia), Prof. S. Ponnusamy and Prof. Satyajit Roy (IIT Madras), Prof. Winnifried Wollner (Technische Universität Darmstadt), Prof. Jordan Hristov (University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy, Bulgaria), Prof. Teoman Özer (Istanbul Technical University), Prof. Aditi Sen De (HRI Allahabad and the recipient of SSB award), Prof. S. Bhattacharya and Prof. T. Raja Sekhar (IIT Kharagpur), Prof. J.C. Mishra (former professor and head of the Department of Mathematics, IIT Kharagpur), and Prof. H. Jafari (the University of South Africa). Prof. Santanu Saha Ray, head of the Department of Mathematics Rourkela, was the conference Convener, while Prof. Suchandan Kayal from the Department of Mathematics was co-convener. The dean academic - Prof. Saroj Kumar Patel, Dean student welfare - Prof. Snehashis Chakravorty, Convener Prof. Santanu Saha Ray, and co-convener Prof. Suchandan Kayal were present during the inaugural function.

## RSP Records Best February performance in key areas

Rourkela : SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) continued its growth trajectory with most of the major units achieving the Best performance in February 2021. The team RSP led by Dipak Chattaraj, CEO has been making positive strides and leaving no stone unturned to take the plant to greater heights of glory.

After beginning the calendar year on a high note with record performance in January 2021, RSP continued the success run by clocking the Best February performance in major areas like hot metal, crude steel, and saleable steel in February 2021. The Steel Plant produced 365540 tonnes of hot metal to register its Best performance thereby improving its earlier best performance of 318282 tonnes achieved in February 2019. Similarly, RSP produced 324433



tonnes of Crude Steel to record the Best performance, the earlier best being 306510 tonnes achieved in February 2020. On the Saleable Steel front too, RSP produced 300002 tonnes to register the best. The New Plate Mill with 70412 tonnes and Plate Mill with 43732 tonnes not only contributed significantly in achieving the feat but also recorded their Best February performance. Sinter Plants with 577762 tonnes of total sinter production and Raw

Materials Handling Plant with a despatch of 1006421 tonnes were the other major units to achieve the Best February performance. The Steel Plant also achieved the Best February saleable steel despatch of 287847 tonnes. Despite the pandemic's unparalleled challenges, riding on the resolute grit and determination of the collective efforts, almost all the units of the plant achieved their targets in February.

## ISRO Officials Visit NIT Rourkela In Search Of Space Tech Centre



Rourkela, March 10: A two-member team of Capacity

Building Programme Office (CBPO) of the Indian

Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

Headquarter visited the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela on 8th March.

Mr. Jiwan Kumar Pandit (Associate Director, CBPO, ISRO-HQ) and Mr. Nishank Kumar (Programme Manager, CBPO, ISRO-HQ) visited the institute for a pre-evaluation on setting up of a Space Technology Incubation Centre ("S-TIC") in NIT Rourkela.

The team came to NIT after the space research body expressed its desire to set

up the S-TIC at the institute. A meeting was held with senior administrative officers of NIT-Rourkela. CBPO director PV Venkatakrishnan also attended the meeting via virtual mode.

The team also visited the Golden Jubilee Building of NIT Rourkela where the center is planned to be housed. The team also appreciated the growth of the Foundation for Technology and Business Incubation (FTBI), NITR

over the period and interacted with incubates. The team visited all the departments and interacted with students and faculties.

According to Prof Sushmita Das of NIT-Rourkela, an MoU would be signed between the institute and ISRO shortly. The S-TIC will cater to Eastern Indian states including Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar islands.



# Namatara firing: six long years fail to erase the scars

Kendrapada : Though six years passed on March 8, 2015, to the unfortunate incident of police firing bullets at the anti-liquor protestors at Namatara village, still the scar and sufferings are fresh with their minds. The passage of time has failed to wipe out the terrible memories of the victims of Namatara. Some of the bullet-injured victims are to be cured fully as most of the time they developed pain where the police bullets pierced their body. Though the RDC (central Range) conducted an inquiry still the inquiry report is yet to be made public.

According to Rashmita Jena, who was studying class 9th during that time and a victim of Namatara firing, said she failed to stand and walk properly following two bullets pierced on her legs, while she was returning from tuition when police fired bullets on 8 March 2015. Her life has changed a lot as she had to stop studying, after her

treatment.

Similarly, Rita Jena, another Namatara firing victim, stated police firing has ruined her life as she failed to appear in the Matric examination. She stopped studying due to most of the time, due to the severe pain in her knee where the bullet pierced, she is yet to walk properly.

Another victim Sasmita Jena, tells her sorry plight that still a bullet is yet to be removed from her body. Most of the time she has to reel under severe pain in her legs. "I have become almost handicapped. I failed to look after my children for sending them to school. My husband has been taking care of me", stated Sasmita.


Notably, hundreds of locals, including women and SHG groups activists of Namatara village on last 8th March 2015 ransacked the liquor shop, protesting against the step-motherly attitude of the district

administration and the Excise department to close down the functioning of a licensed foreign liquor shop at Namatara village under Rajkanika police limit. The irate mob later torched the police vehicle on the spot and brick batting was started between police and locals. Later, the then SP of Kendrapada reached the spot with the executive magistrate and police force to take stock of the situation, the mob once again aggravated for which police used lathi-charge and opened blank fire to disperse the mob to bring the situation under control. As many as nine persons sustained injuries, including school students. Later, 5 out of nine injured returned from SCB medical college and hospital at Cuttack after undergoing treatment at the Surgery department.

Notably, the then RDC (CR), Akhila Bihari Ota, on last 25 August 2016 had started a probe on Namatara

police firing by issuing notices to the victims, police staff. From 25 to 27 August, 57 persons faced the RDC probe on Namatara police firing during that period. During the inquiry, the then RDC (CR) directed the district collector to take steps for providing free treatment. Activists also brought the alleged matter before the notice of the Odisha Human Rights Commission and National Human Rights Commission about the police excess. Though the RDC (central range) had made the inquiry last 2016, the inquiry report is yet to be made public, despite the demands from several quarters. According to ADM of Kendrapada, Basantkumar Rout, acting in the direction of OHRC, the district administration disbursed a sum of Rs50,000 to each of the bullet injured victims whereas Rs 1.50 lakh to the severely injured Sasmita Jena along with all the government aids. The Namatara firing



victims alleged that though they have received the compensation amount, it is too little if one can see the sufferings of the victims during those days. 

## Women scripted their success story, become self-empowered



Kendrapada (Rajesh Kumar Behera) : Once they were struggling to get a rupee to meet their needs but now they are self-empowered, thanks to Mission Shakti. These minority community women have scripted their successful story of women empowerment has become role model for others by winning accolades not only from the district but also in other countries as their products have a great demand in and out of the country.

Meet the successful women of the Golarhat village under Derabish block. The state government-sponsored ORMAS and Mission Shakti have helped them become self-empowered.

If sources are to be believed, some women of Golarhat Muslim Basti, have formed a SHG group "Utkal Grameen Producer Group" in 2017 November with the help of ORMAS. Later, they got skill development training from District Industrial center (DIC) for making appliques (locally called Chandua). They were provided

financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh under ORMAS for purchasing raw materials, tailoring machine, and office furniture to start their Chandua making works.


They too got training under mission Shakti for making bed sheet, embroidery, patchwork bedsheet, khadi handkerchief, embroidery based shawl, door and window screen, designed table cloth, embroidery saree, pillow cover, khadi bag, school bag etc.

Meanwhile, about 50 women and girls, have been engaged in the endeavor.

Their hand-made items have a good demand in the country, also they were getting orders from the countries like Afghanistan, Saudi Arab and Kuwait.

Earlier, we used to remain idle in our houses after completing household works. We used to pass time by gossiping with family members. Now, the SHG has changed our style of living and made us the self-empowered, and provided us the earnings of around Rs 3000 to Rs 5000.

The district collector, Amrit Raturaj, visited the Golarhat-based Utkal Grameen Producer Group and praised the minority community women for becoming self-empowered through Mission Shakti and assured to provide them modern technology-based stitching machines.

Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik, in his tweet recently praised the women of Derabish area for being self-empowered under mission Shakti and managed to create their own identity. 

## The FD takes measure to save animals from heat and fire at Bhitarkanika


Kendrapada : The wildfire in Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve continues to rage for almost a fortnight destroys the flora. To prevent such accidental wildfire at Bhitarkanika National park, the concerned authorities have taken adequate measures by the engaging anti-poaching squad at the vulnerable points within the Kanika forest range.

The accidental fire used to break out during the summer at Bhitarkanika National park, though such wildfire incident is very low here at Bhitarkanika National park, the honey collectors used to trespass into the national park smoking bidi and later carelessly throw the burning ends of bidi on the dry leave, resulting fire broke out at National park. So, the anti-poaching squad was asked to remain alert and to douse the wildfire if it breaks out at the National park, informed Bikash Ranjan Dash, the DFO of Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and wildlife Division.

According to DFO, Dash,

a couple of awareness meetings were held with the anti-poaching squads and mangrove protection members in this regard and asked to remain alert by submitting the daily report.

As the summer season with the rise of mercury level along with high humidity during the day in coastal Kendrapada, many wildlife, especially wild boar and deer, generally sneaked from the Bhitarkanika National park to nearby ponds and other water bodies of nearby villages, located at the fringes of Bhitarkanika national park, to quench their thirst as the animals could not get sufficient sweet water to quench their thirst in the scorching heat. The forest department has taken all necessary arrangements to protect the wildlife from the scorching heat and humidity in the summer. Generally, the animals get irritated when the temperature is high. It is necessary to keep them cool and provide them with a near-natural habitat. So arrangements were made to

ensure that there is adequate drinking water so that the animals do not dehydrate and do not skip from the forest to the human habitation. Four numbers of existing ponds along with ditches have been renovated under the Bhitarkanika forest block. Two new ponds have been excavated at Bhitarkanika forest block and also at Mahisamada forest block intending to mitigate the water scarcity and to provide sufficient water to the hoofed animal and wild boars for drinking. The department is going to take steps at the crocodile at Dangamal Crocodile Research center to provide a better cooling environment to nearly a hundred crocodile hatchlings, who stay at the hatchery in the ongoing scorching summer as the reptile hatchlings are more susceptible to the heat. The forest personnel will take all efforts to ensure that the heatwave does not cause any casualties in the coming summer. 



# Residents blocked NH-60 demanding water

Balasore :The residents of Junbalada village under Kulida Gram Panchayat in Basta Police Station of Balasore district choked National Highway-60 recently demanding drinking water facility to their village. As the local administration did not address this problem has been arising from March every year. The vehicular services on the NH-60 had been stoped for an hour at 9 am as the irate villagers placing pitchers on the NH did not allow any vehicle from both directions for urging the demand.

Jharana Dalai and



SukantiMahalickled the irate women protesters demanded that nearly 1400 people living Junbalada village consistingof three colonies. Most of the dwellers are below the

poverty line and SC and ST communities. The Government provided 4 tube-wells to the village in different phases three years back to cater drinking water. But the

water woe has continued to hunt in the villagers for a couple of years as the four tube-wells are not functioning well. Though the pipeline water supply is partly

catering to the needs of the dwellers as the motor of the project is most often remains defunct. "We were forced to choke the NH-60 this morning as a mark of protest against the officers of the RWSS department and Sarpanch who did not pay heed to the issue. To chock, the NH is not fair and adversely affected the communication on the NH but we had no alternative to raise our demand before the concerned officials," said Jharana Dalai.

IIC Ashok Nayak said that the irate people, most of

them were women, choked the NH for an hour, and later they withdrew following the assurance of officers and local representatives.

Junior Engineer of RWSS in Basta Vinod Das and KulidaSarpanch Sunil Senapati along with a team of cops from Basta Police Station rushed to the spot. The impasse had been withdrawn after both JEE and Sarpanch assured the irate dwellers to repair the defective tub-wells soon and immediately provide a pipe-line water supply to the village.

# The inferno rages unabated in Similipal national park

## *The Forest department's lackadaisical attitude is the cause behind the inferno*

Baripada (Sukant Kumar Sahu) : The fire raging has affected the ecology of Odisha's Similipal forest the second largest biosphere reserve of Asia. The similipal national park stretching with 2750 sqkm is lost its shine due to the wildlife fire that becomes the headache of the forest officials. Either the fire may have been ignited by forest dwellers for the collection of mahua flowers or by the poachers to easily kill the animals. The lackadaisical remedial measures of the forest department are blamed for the inferno to spread across the Similipal forest and becomes uncontrollable.

Sushil Kumar Dutta a retired professor of North Orissa University and herpetologist who visited the Similipal numerous times with his researchers and students in search of reptiles and other species raised the voice against the forest department of negligence. While the crores of rupees financial assistance is being sponsored by both state and center for the protection of elephants, big cats, plantation, periphery development, and planting of grass for harbingers but the assistances were not properly utilised in the biosphere reserve. The programs are only run in pen and paper. There has been no high-level

inspection has been made by the government through an agency or any task force over the implementation of funds. He said many mammals and reptiles even wildlife life must have burnt to death due to the inferno in Similipal but the department claiming no animal reportedly succumbed in the forest inferno. It should need an impartial inquiry over the issue.

The forest department has been avoiding NASA report. While more than 600 fire sports came to notice by satellite, the department denied it and claiming the fire is undercontrol, without having any substantial evidence. The forest and wildlife department of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district is all set to gear up to combat forest fire after five persons including a 7-year-old girl in Thakurmunda police station on Sunday afternoon got severe burn injuries when they were on way to different destinations in an auto-rickshaw and an Omni car faced accident as the operators of the vehicles could not trace the road due to heavy smoke and fire caught in Khejuria reserve forest. The five passengers later were getting burnt injuries due to the forest fire after a road mishap at that place.

While it has needed precautionary measures before the kindling of fire to spread in Similipal and its adjoining places. This year it is believed the department has delayed in taking the fire extinguishing measure.

To combat the mishap the forest and wildlife department of STR here have formed squads for 21 rangers by the leadership of Deputy Rangers, Foresters, Forest Guard, Protection Assistance, and Forest Fight Management over 21 ranges who have been under North and South STR Wildlife Divisions Baripada, Rairangpur and Karanjia Territorial Divisions for the district.

Deputy Director of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) JagyandattaPati said that the forest fire is naturally taking place from February to April every year that has allegedly been made by human beings. They take such steps either for the collection of Mahua flowers or intentionally to damage forests. It is a continuous practice they have been making every year.

To combat the forest fire, the department in five forest divisions has alerted round-the-clock. As per the order of Principal Chief Conservator of the forest of Odisha and Regional Chief Conservator of Forest(RCCF) of Similipal



Tiger Reserve(STR) their forest squads under the leadership of Deputy Rangers have formed over 21 ranges along with a facility of 210 air-blowers and fire lines formations to prevent the forests fire.

Apart from the initiatives taken by the department, the villages and panchayats level meetings are conducted with help of tribal priests and panchayats' representatives to aware tribal people who are living near the forest not to make a fire in forests and their adjoining areas, the DD JD Pati said. The forest fire is a mishap made by either accidental or local tribals to collect the mahua flowers and another forest minor produces.

All fire points in forests have

been communicated by Forest Survey of India, Dehradun that images captured by satellite in forests of respective states, the DD said adding that Besarpani, Nirgida, Pitabata, Podadhia, Thakurmunda, and Kendumundi are the sensitive places of the forest fire.

However, when princes of the royal family of Baripada intervened in the wildfire and tweeted to Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and it brought notice to Forest and Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar the state government and forest department awake and started fire extinguish drive with help of local involvement and Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force, police and PS members.

In the meantime, the bears and deers of Kuldiha wildlife sanctuary in Balasore division and a deer in Karanjia division forced to move human settlement as the places were safer them due to the fire raging in forests.

The official said as many as three poachers were arrested for allegedly involved in forest fire from Podadiha, two were from Dudhiani range under Karanjia division.

On Friday a central team also visited Similipal national park after being directed by Forest and Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar. Deputy Chief Secretary of Forest and Environment govt. Odisha Mona Sharma Thursday visited several places and interacted with forest dwellers.



## National Safety Week Celebration at IMFA Therubali



Rayagada (Jogeswar Das) : 50th National safety week 2021 was observed in IMFA Therubali campus today by hoisting the flag by Chief Guest Mr. Ranjit Kumar Nayak Asst. Director Factories & Boilers, Raygada Zone along with Mr. K V Rao Factory Manager following COVID 19 protocol. Ramakrushna

Tripathy Sr. Manager Safety has administered a safety oath to all staff and workmen. Mr. K V Rao addressed the gathering and emphasized reporting near-miss incidents so that it will help in improving the safety culture. As IMFA Therubali is in the proactive safety culture phase, everyone's effort towards

safety will lead to progress and achieve the target of Vision Zero. Chief guest Mr. Ranjit Kumar Nayak address the august gathering and congratulate the efforts of the IMFA team in pandemic situations to protect themselves and the community by following all rules & regulations formulated by the

government. This year's theme "Learn from Incident and Prepare for a safer future" he emphasized our effort towards our emergency preparedness and response procedure which we had demonstrated during our mock drill conducted on 25th February 2021. He also focused on the adoption of 5 T formulated by Odisha Govt and the implementation of Ten action points to improve the safety system at the site. He expressed gratitude to IMFA management for his focused approach to the safety management system. During the safety week celebrations training programs on different topics has been planned for staff and workmen. Mr. K K Nayak DGM HR conveyed a vote of thanks.

## Civic Action Programme 2020-21

Raygada (Jogeswar Das) : On March 1, 04 Bn Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) of Rayagada (Odisha) organized a Civic Action Programme in the Maoist effected Area of village Gudai limits of Rayagada District. The program was launched to combat left-wing extremism and bridge the gap between villagers and security personnel through wining their hearts & minds. Distribution of water Sintex by Smt. Mitu Roy, Second-In-Command under supervision of Shri. Manoj



Kumar Yadav Commandant-of 04 Bn CRPF at G/4 Bn CRPF Gudari location in District Rayagada as a part of Civic Action Programme 2020-21 to needy various Schools and

temple of SaraswatiSishuMandir, Sri Vasavi Kanya Parameswari Panchayatan, Govt (SSD) Girls High School, Odisha AdarshaVidyalaya, Sri

Manikeswari Temple, Satya Sai SevaSameti, etc (22 Nos). of Gudari, Madhuban, Bhurukudu, Kadama, Sanahuma, Dumuriguda, Asada, Shiriguda and Talakhariguda village areas in the presence of Insp. Sambhu Tiwari (Gudari Coy), Sh. Susanth Kumar (IIC Gudari), Sh. SambubhusanSabar (NAC (ED) Officer), Smt. PratimaSabar (Sarpanch of Madhuban), Sh. BaramKimbaka (Sarpanch of Kadma) and Sh. MadhabaSabar (Ward Member of Asada).

## ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India plans \$6.88 billion steel plant

Bhubaneswar, March 4: The proposed plant to be built by the joint venture between ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel would have an annual production capacity of 12 million tonnes, the state government of Odisha said in a statement.

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd signed an agreement on Thursday with Odisha to build a \$6.88 billion steel mill. The proposed plant to be built by the joint venture

between ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel would have an annual production capacity of 12 million tonnes, the state government of Odisha said in a statement. ArcelorMittal, which is controlled by billionaire Lakshmi Mittal, has previously tried to set up a steel plant in Keonjhar, Odisha.

It had to scrap that original plan for a 12 million-tonne-a-year steel plant after the company



failed to acquire the requisite land for the facility and failed to secure approval for an iron ore mine that would provide raw materials.

Other industrial

ventures have struggled to take off due to bureaucratic delays that have undermined India's investment appeal and slowed growth in Asia's third-largest economy.

## Dr Seema Rao, India's first woman commando trainer

Dr Rao is India's first and the only woman commando trainer -- she has trained over 20,000 soldiers of India's armed forces, paramilitary, and the police services - in close-quarter battle referred to mostly by its short-form CQB. "I've trained the army, navy, navy commandos, air force commandos, Guards, special forces, paramilitary, and the ATS QRTs (Quick Response Team) of different states," says Dr Rao.

Her desire to serve the country in this manner may have come to her because her father Ramakant Sinari was a freedom fighter, who narrated freedom struggle stories ever since she was a little girl. Or because her husband Deepak Rao -- who she met in medical college when she was 16 -- was interested in martial arts.

According to Dr Rao, martial arts taught her to be strong and helped her face unpleasant situations and conquer them. Over the past two decades, so they could continue serving the nation selflessly, the Raos have put everything they have had at stake.

How did they survive? Dr Rao says: "I had to sell off our gold and FDs (fixed deposits), etc, to survive." Now income comes in from their Jeet Kune Do (Bruce Lee-style martial arts) and self-defense classes that they conduct for civilians and corporates in Mumbai. "There was one time when we were bankrupt. But, you know, we didn't give in to wanting to charge the forces because -- our soldiers and our forces -- they do so much, you know, take care of us, they safeguard the country. So I think in a small way, if I am contributing, then all this is nothing, it's no big deal."

Dr Rao feels her journey would have been incomplete



without her husband's support and love. She believes that men and women perfectly complement each other, like the yin and yang, "I also feel that the woman and man can work together wonderfully, because the attributes that are present in a man, may not be there in a woman and vice versa. So when they come together, they can work using their attributes together to succeed, to live well, to progress. Deepak and I usually say 1 + 1 should not be equal to 2; it should be 11."

### Message to youngsters

"You live only once, okay. Life comes once. In this one life, you must live to your maximum potential. You should do everything that you want to do. You must think well before doing whatever it is that you want to do. And once you've decided to do it, then you should go ahead with all the passion and fire in your heart."

"There will always be obstacles -- from outside; from inside." "Believe me, we all have these obstacles. But some people understand this and learn to go around or over the obstacle. Others allow the obstacle to subdue them. "Once you identify that obstacle, you have to go through it, above it or around it. But you have to reach your goal."



# A crisis with a woman's face



Sirish C. Mohanty

As the world marks International Women's Day amid a global pandemic, one stark fact is clear: the COVID-19 crisis has a woman's face. The pandemic is worsening already deep inequalities facing women and girls, erasing years of progress towards gender equality. Women are more likely to work in sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. Most essential frontline workers are women - many from racially and ethnically marginalized groups and at the bottom of the economic ladder.

Women are 24 percent more vulnerable to losing their jobs and suffering steeper falls in income. The gender pay gap is already high, has widened in the health sector too. Unpaid care has increased dramatically owing to stay-at-home orders and school and childcare closures. Millions of girls may never return to school. Mothers - especially single

mothers - have faced acute adversity and anxiety. The pandemic has also sparked a parallel epidemic of violence against women worldwide, with skyrocketing domestic abuse, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and child marriage.

With International Women's Day, the United Nation's upcoming Generation Equality Forum aims to focus on feminist movements and leadership as an action agenda. However, in India, climbing the ladder of political leadership remains a deeply inequitable enterprise. While reservations have improved women's participation, much of the day-to-day functioning of Indian politics remains a man's game. A disadvantage faced by women is the reluctance of major political parties to give more tickets to women candidates. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Congress gave only 13 percent of its tickets

to women and the BJP gave 12 percent of its tickets. Parties like Trinamool Congress and the BJD, which have given 37 percent and 33 percent of tickets to women respectively, have done a far better job than the larger parties.

At the national level, while the 2019 Lok Sabha elections saw an increase in representation of women representatives, only 14% of the Members of Parliament (MPs) in India are women. At the state level, women make up only nine percent of the elected candidates of state legislative assemblies. Globally, India ranks 122 out of 153 countries when it comes to women's representation in parliament, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020.

Women's representation in panchayats in India, on the other hand, is relatively better, thanks to the reservations brought in by the 73rd

constitutional amendment that ensures one-third of leadership positions for women. However, this increased representation masks the barriers that women face in getting elected or while in office. In this sector too, Odisha tops the list, ensuring provisions for 50 percent reservations for women while in most of the cases they are remote-controlled by men.

Meanwhile, even though women represent the majority of health care workers, a recent study found that only 3.5 percent of COVID-19 task forces had equal numbers of men and women. In global news coverage of the pandemic, just one of every five expert sources were women. All of this exclusion is itself an emergency like the COVID-19. The world needs a new push to advance women's leadership and equal participation. And such action will benefit all. The COVID-19 response has highlighted the power and effectiveness of women's leadership. Over the past year, countries with women leaders have had lower transmission rates and are often better positioned for recovery. Women's organizations have filled crucial gaps in providing critical services and information,

especially at the community level. Across the board, when women lead in government, we see bigger investments in social protection and greater inroads against poverty. When women are in parliament, countries adopt more stringent policies on climate change. When women are at the peace table, agreements are more enduring.

Even after heavy demand from all quarters including women groups, the women's reservation bill was not tabled by the NDA government in the recently-concluded budget and winter sessions of Parliament. The Women Reservation Bill, in discussion over the last two decades, proposes to amend the Constitution to reserve 33 percent of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and all legislative assemblies. To bridge the gender gap in political decision-making the Women's reservation bill can become a very strong catalyzing tool. Political leadership plays the most important role in nation-building and if we will have an adequate number of women leaders, in the law-making process, they would significantly impact policy decisions and raise aspirations among teenage girls. We were very hopeful that our Prime Minister

Narendra Modi launched *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* Yojna and the intention of his government appeared honorable in this context. A ray of hope was visible for the passage of the Women Reservation Bill too. The main objective of the Bill is to enhance the participation of women in decision-making. Several researchers have found that despite the handicaps women leaders might face in terms of education and experience, they invested more in public goods preferred by women suggesting that reservation for women had important effects on local policy decisions in the reserved gram panchayats. This is high time to scale up the process at national and state levels. It is high time for women to take their rightful place in the state legislatures and Parliament. Political leadership should not have any doubt regarding Women's power and women in leadership positions are more likely, than their male counterparts, to make decisions that further the cause of an inclusive and just society. In this context, women's reservation has huge potential to transform governance in India.

## The daughters of Lord Shiva

Lord Shiva and Devi Parvati have three daughters who are not as popular as their sons but are still worshipped in some parts of India. These daughters have been mentioned in Shiva Purana and even many religious scriptures, stories mention their existence.

Going by the names of Ashokasundari, Jyoti, and Vasuki or Manasa, they never had the popularity as their father, mother, and siblings but they have been worshipped in some parts of India religiously.

Here Are The Stories Of Each Of Them.

1. The Story Of

Ashokasundari

Ashokasundari is the first daughter of Lord Shiva, she was created by Goddess Parvati. You can read about her in detail in 'Padma Purana'. The religious stories suggest that Goddess Parvati created Ashokasundari to reduce her loneliness.

Parvati named her Ashokasundari because she let Parvati get rid of her sorrow 'Shok' and she was extremely beautiful 'Sundari'.

She is worshipped mainly in Gujarat and not much has been known about her except the famous story that she was present at the

time when Shiva beheaded Ganesha. The story says that at that time she hid behind a sack of salt in fear.

Since then Ashokasundari has been associated with salt which symbolises the eternal taste of life and without which life is unsavory.

2. Shiva's Second Daughter Goddess Jyoti

The second daughter of Lord Shiva is Jyoti. Her name means light and she is popular as the Hindu goddess of light. There are two different stories about her birth.

The first story suggests that Lord Shiva's daughter

Jyoti emerged from the halo of her father and she is a physical manifestation of Shiva's grace but the second story says that she has taken birth from a spark.

3. The Story Of Manasa.

Manasa's story is intriguing of them all. She was born when Shiva's semen touched a statue carved by the mother of snakes, Kadru. Manasa is indeed Shiva's daughter but she is not Goddess Parvati's child.

Manasa Devi is the goddess who cures snake bites.

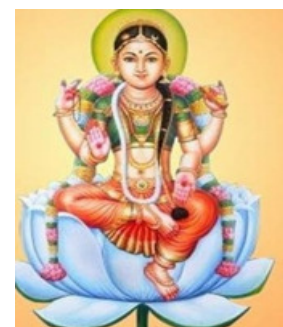
The stories suggest that Manasa has a bad temper

because she faced rejection from her father, her husband, and her step-mother Parvati. She also hates Goddess Parvati for never accepting her as a daughter.

Goddess Manasa is ritually worshipped in temples of Bengal. She is worshipped without an image, generally, an earthen snake image or an earthen pot or a branch of a tree is worshipped as the Goddess Manasa.

Her cult is widespread in Bengal and she is widely worshipped in the rainy season because at that time snakes become more active.

She is also worshipped



for protection from snake bites and infectious diseases like smallpox and chickenpox.

Where these three don't have many mentions in our religious stories and sculptures, there is enough evidence that all three of them are real.



# Keonjhar's mines may power the economy, but what about its people?



Sirish C Mohanty

by 2031, which would contribute about 2.1 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation, and in the next decade, its share should be exceeding three percent. India's target is to grow annually at 12 percent over the next five years, to a \$5 trillion GDP by 2024, and Odisha's Keonjhar the most mistreated district would play a dominant role in this unprecedented growth story.

## The 'richest, and the poorest district of the country.

But so far, mining has not yielded commensurate dividends to life in Keonjhar. In the past three decades, less than one percent of the district has enjoyed a b n o r m a l affluence. Keonjhar's Joda mining area has the distinction of being the sole supplier of raw material to two major steel plants, one is at Jamshedpur 10 mtpa in the state of Jharkhand and the other is at Duburi 6 mtpa in Jajpur district, both are owned by the Tata steel. Jamshedpur steelworks sources its raw material from Joda East Iron Mines while Duburi sources its raw material from Khandbandh Iron mines in Joda, Keonjhar. Very recently Arcelor Mittal and Nippon steel have decided to set up a 12 million tonnes steel plant in the Kendrapada district and they are to source the raw material from the Joda mining area. The Essar steel transports 9 mtpa through slurry pipelines using the Baitarani water to pelletize at Paradip and then ships to its Hazira steel plant in Gujarat. The BRPL transports 4 mtpa

iron ore by slurry pipelines and JSW also has a big plan underway to use slurry pipelines using the Baitarani water. I have no hesitation saying the steel conglomerates behave as the East India Co; have never pondered if they have any moral responsibility

youths and households have not benefitted from the mining auctions, rather, several thousand mining laborers have all of a sudden lost their jobs and dumped in the drain like a used condom. None in the helm of affair thought about

mines. The cries of the Keonjhar's mining dependants vanish in the dusty air unheard of.

All the mineral-rich districts of the state are featured in the list of India's most backward districts. In Keonjhar, the epicenter of

Besides, Thousands of workers have lost their job because of the closure of several small mineral-based industries, they are- Deepak steel and power, Sri Ganesh sponge and power Ltd, Sesa Goa Enterprises, East India Minerals, Aditya sponge and Power, Sri Jagannath Metaliks, Kusum Power met, Banspani Iron Ltd and more than a few small units in the district. The state government appears not serious about reopening the closed plants. The AM&NS for their 12 mta steel plant in Kendrapada needs 4000 acres of land, and that will be an uphill task for the state like that of the POSCO steel project. In such a case the state government should take an initiative to deal with the closed plant of OSIL in Palaspanga which can very comfortably meet the land requirement. Since the site is at a stone's throw to the mine area, while it can employ several thousand of the district. Similarly, Kalinga Ironworks at Barbil could easily be converted to a modern steel plant if holistically tried. Does the state seriously think about it or keep taciturn until 2024?

We have missed the bus in the past, but can't afford it again. Even now, we can make Keonjhar an island of development by using mining judiciously and smartly, with legitimate nationalism and development in heart. Failing this, we will helplessly watch our mineral wealth racing in the fast lane of self-destruction.



(A little girl eats rice-in-water (Pakhal) with boiled potato crush in Joda mining area)

towards the dwellers of the area wherefrom they source their raw material and water. The state government too has a blind eye for the sorry state of affairs of the people who mandated it with heart and soul.

Under the soil, Keonjhar is a Ratna Bhandara (treasury of gems), and over the soil, the district is a perennial straggler. Despite its riches, the mineral-bearing areas are reeling under an alarming rate of unemployment, which is more than the national average of 6.1 percent. The extraction industry accounts for over 30 percent of the industry sector's contribution. Keonjhar's

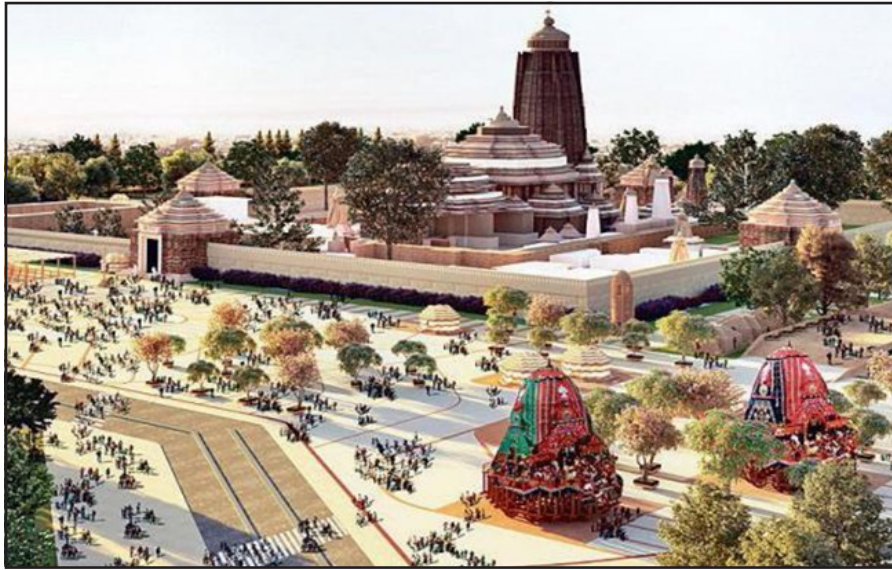
these humanoids who are human beings just like them, they are citizens of the country and are guaranteed by the constitution the right to food and a job. No provision was made in the auction to ensure continuing their job. No voice was raised for those anthropomorphic creatures. Does anybody know where they have gone? How many of them have starved to death? No, never. Thousands of unemployed youths who used to meet both ends by engaging trucks on mineral transport have snappishly been replaced by giant fleet owners who followed the new masters of auctioned

mining, 69 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. In Koraput, Asia's bauxite capital, 79 percent live below the poverty line. The percentage of the BPL population is on the rise. Keonjhar's two major employment provider industries have been shut down. One is Orissa Sponge Iron Limited, having the distinction of being Asia's first sponge Iron plant at Palaspanga and the other is Kaling Iron Works at Barbil. Due to the closure of OSIL over 5000 employees direct and indirectly lost their job. Kaling Iron Works used to provide over 3000 jobs.





# CM tables resolution on the development of corridor around Puri temple



Bhubaneswar (Debabrata Mohanty): Days after the BJD and the BJP sparred on draft heritage bylaws on the 12th century Jagannath temple of Puri, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday presented a resolution in the state assembly on the ₹3,200 crores Shrimandira Parikrama Plan calling Lord Jagannath the symbol of Odia esteem and pride.

"The greatest identity of Odia community is Lord Jagannath. Our history, culture, tradition, and belief system are all centered on the Almighty. He is the symbol of Odia's esteem and pride. Visiting the Jagannath Temple

once in a lifetime and getting a glimpse of the Lord is the only prayer of millions of devotees. All devotees, who come to the Jagannath temple in Puri to see the Lord, have a desire in their hearts to behold the deities in a calm, beautiful and spiritual environment. It is the responsibility of all of us to come back with a divine feeling," said Patnaik as opposition Congress and BJP welcomed the resolution for the development of the temple.

As per the Shrimandira Parikrama Plan, the entire area within 75-meters around the Jagannath Temple will be transformed into a heritage

corridor to attract devotees from across the world.

As per the Srimandir Parikrama project heritage, as many as 22 projects will be executed in three phases within a couple of years. The area around the temple would be divided into 9 zones.

A 7-meter green buffer zone adjacent to the Meghanad wall would come up followed by a 10-meter-long AntarParikrama which will be used for the ceremonial procession of the deities. Besides, there will also be an 8-meter-long outer pradikshyan for devotees and a 10-meter public conveyance zone having restrooms,

drinking water fountain, information-cum-donation kiosks, and shelter pavilions.

There is also a provision of a 5-meter service lane for the maintenance of the corridor, a 4.5-meter dedicated shuttle-cum-emergency lane, a 7.5-meter mixed traffic lane to aid the movement of vehicles around the corridor, and a seven-meter wide shaded footpath with trees.

The eastern plaza of the corridor is proposed as a large open space. A reception center with a capacity to house 6,000 devotees and a cloakroom facility for 4,000 families is also planned. The mutts will be developed in Kalingan style architecture. Around 15.65 acres of land have been acquired for the heritage corridor. Calling the Jagannath temple as a center of Odisha's spiritual heritage, CM Patnaik said the state has been inherited from generation to generation. "We have preserved this priceless treasure for our future descendants in the legacy. We have to look into the ShrimandiraParikrama Plan with this spirit and make it happen with collective efforts. We need to take a vow to complete the Shrimandira Parikrama Plan with dedication at the earliest. To give a chance to all Odias and devotees of

Lord Jagannath who want to contribute to this sacred act." Patnaik said three objectives were considered for Srimandir ParikramaYojana that was recommended by justice BP Das Committee. The recommendations were - the safety of Srimandir, the safety of millions of devotees visiting the temple for darshan of deities, and the creation of a spiritual atmosphere for devotees. The resolution for the Jagannath temple comes in the backdrop of the draft heritage bylaw for Jagannath temple issued by the National Monument Authority kicking up a political storm last month with the BJD alleging that it would affect the proposed development plan of the area around the shrine. Following appeals from the BJD and the BJP, the NMA, earlier this month, withdrew the bylaws that would have stopped any new construction within a 100-meter radius of the temple. The NMA also put on hold two other draft bylaws for Ananta Vasudeva temple and Brahmeswar temple in Bhubaneswar that would have affected the development of the area around the 11th century Lingaraj temple. "Instead of pitching Jagannath temple as a symbol of Odia pride and esteem and bring religion into

state's political discourse, the BJD would do well by focussing on real issues like paddy procurement and unemployment plaguing the state. In Bengal, the BJP got an entry as Mamata Banerjee wanted to appease Muslims by reading Namaaz. The soft Hindutva line to counter the BJP would not work and the BJD should realise that," said Ali Kishore Patnaik, state secretary of CPI(M).

BJP MP from Bhubaneswar, Aparajita Sarangi, said the development of the Jagannath temple should be done as per the NMA and ASI guidelines. "As per the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (or AMASR Act) 1958, no new works can be undertaken in the prohibited area within 100 meters radius of the Srimandir. However, various heritage monuments under the 75 meters of the temple, were demolished in the name of beautification and development. On behalf of the people of Odisha, I want to ask the State government whether detailed mapping was conducted before razing the mutts. Most importantly, whether the permission of the National Monument Authority (NMA) and the ASI was taken before razing them," she stated.

## India makes an impressive return to international hockey, beat Germany 6-1

Krefeld : Young VivekSagar Prasad scored a brace as the Indian men's hockey team outclassed Germany 6-1 in its Europe tour opener to make an impressive return to the international circuit following the coronavirus-forced break.

Vivek (27th, 28th minutes), Nilakanta Sharma (13th), Lalit Kumar Upadhyay (41st), Akashdeep Singh (42nd), and Harmanpreet Singh (47th) were the goal scorers for India.

Hungry to perform, India played with an intent to win.

They went on an attacking mode right from the start, putting pressure on the German line-up. After creating potential opportunities in the striking circle, India earned a penalty corner in the 13th minute of the first quarter, which saw midfielder Nilakanta breaking the deadlock for the visitors.

However, in the next minute, forward Constantin Staib scored an equaliser for Germany. The second quarter started with the hosts putting pressure on India and earned themselves two back-to-back penalty corners in the

initial minutes. The Indian side made brilliant saves and created quick counter-attacks which led to midfielder Vivek scoring two back-to-back 27th and 28th minutes. In the third quarter, the hosts started on the front foot again and earned as many as six penalty corners. However, skipper PR Sreejesh stood firm in front of the goal to keep the Germans at bay. Soon after a solid defensive display, Indian forwards Lalit and Akashdeep netted brilliant goals in the 41st and 42nd minute, respectively to put the world no. 4 Indian teams in the driver's seat.

Another glorious opportunity came for the Indian men at the 47th minute in the form of a penalty corner, and Harmanpreet extended India's lead with a fierce flick. Playing under pressure, the hosts did try hard to make a comeback and even pulled out their goalkeeper to put an extra attacker in the team but a great overall performance from the Indian side ensured a 6-1 victory. "It was thrilling to play after so long and the coach's advice to us was 'go and enjoy the game' and so we did. This was the same German side



who are playing the FIH Hockey Pro League matches, and I feel we did well against this squad, considering we were playing after a year. "We had worked a lot on

individual skills and had planned tactical play against Germany back in the camp. We just had to execute it today and it was really exciting to be back with a win," said Sreejesh.



# Land acquisition could be a turning point for ArcelorMittal's Rs 50,000-crore Odisha steel plant

**Though rich in mineral resources, Odisha's chequered past of letting go of big-ticket investment proposals for its failure to arrange land is the challenge before Arcelor Mittal-Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) as it revisits a plan to set up a Rs 50,000 crore steel plant in Kendrapada in the state.**

The unit requires 4,000-acre land and the state government will have to facilitate the acquisition of the land on time.

While the memorandum of understanding (MoUs) signed on Thursday between the Odisha government and the company is just an expression of intent, a binding agreement will be signed only after the land and mining leases are transferred to the world's largest steelmaker.

The Odisha government has assured AM/NS India, according to a statement issued by the state government, to

provide "all the required support and facilitation for the setting up of this mega project", but the MoU does not mention the land acquisition.

Incidentally, ArcelorMittal hasn't issued any statement on the MoU so far.

NRI billionaire LN Mittal-led ArcelorMittal had earlier attempted to set up a greenfield steel plant in the state. In 2006, the company had signed a similar MoU with the state but abandoned the plan in 2013 due to an inordinate delay in land acquisition and allocation of captive iron ore blocks. South Korean Posco also aborted

its 12 MTPA plant in Odisha for want of land around the same time.

This time around, ArcelorMittal joined hands with Japan's Nippon Steel for signing on the initial agreement. Jointly they have got a strong foothold in India with the acquisition of erstwhile Essar Steel through the insolvency route. AM/NS India, the 60:40 joint venture between the world's largest steelmaker ArcelorMittal and Japan's Nippon Steel, has also acquired an iron ore mining lease in Odisha only. Odisha's government is also far more investor-friendly now.

Industry watchers, however, are apprehensive, particularly because apart from Tata Steel's Kalinganagar plant, greenfield steel plants have rarely come up in India in recent times and the main hurdle is related to land acquisition.

"An MoU is a very preliminary agreement; it is not binding upon any party. The signing of the MoU does not mean that the plan will be surely be executed. ArcelorMittal had burnt its fingers earlier. But one has to admit that the ground situation is better now and be optimistic that the required land will be made available



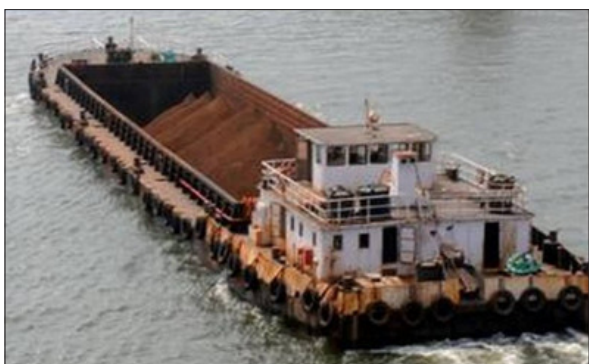
to the company" one observer said.

A senior industry leader, however, said, "I am sure the state will help the company in acquiring land."

AM/NS India's project turning into reality will not just make India closer to the 300

MTPA capacity target, it may also help other foreign companies to set up a manufacturing base in India. India's per capita steel consumption is just around one-third of the world average, and thus, there is a huge scope for growth of the steel industry in India.

## 'Discriminatory': Goa in Supreme Court on mining leases renewal cancellation



Panaji : The Mining Industry has been one of the major sources of revenue generation for the state and also a source of employment generation, the Goa government said to the SC.

Goa not getting the benefit of second renewal in mining leases when other states have the same advantage will amount to discrimination, the coastal state has told the Supreme Court. The mining industry in the state came to a

standstill in March 2018, after the top court quashed the second renewal of 88 iron ore mining leases.

"There are second renewals granted although they were not renewed for several years. As far as the state of Goa is concerned, the benefit of the 2nd renewal, which is available and granted to the rest of the country, is denied. This would amount to discrimination and a judgment of the court cannot be interpreted to

give such absurd and unequal treatment to different states under the same law," said the Goa government seeking review of the Supreme Court order.

The state government has told the apex court that its mining leases are eligible for renewal till 2037. The mining leaseholders have also claimed that leases in Goa were eligible for a 'second renewal', an opportunity they claim they were not provided.

In a February 2018 order, the top court canceled 88 active mining leases in Goa that was 'hurriedly' issued and reiterated that the leases had 'expired' in 2007 and if mining is to restart, fresh leases need to be issued. It dealt a blow to mining as the grant of fresh leases now needs to be done via

auction, something that the state government and Goa's mining leaseholders are reluctant to agree to.

Mining leases in Goa granted by the erstwhile Portuguese regime were converted to leases under the MMDR Act via the Goa Daman and Diu Mining Concessions (Abolition and Conversion Leases) Act, 1987 with effect from 1961, the year Goa was made part of India.

The period from 1961 onwards was considered the grant of the lease whereas the period from 1987 was considered the 'first renewal' which was valid till 2007. Goa's mining leaseholders applied for 'second renewals' in 2007 but the State government didn't act on the applications instead allowing the leases to continue to operate on a

'deemed extension' basis which the Supreme Court in 2014 declared as illegal. The Supreme Court ruled that since the Goa government didn't renew the leases in 2007 they were now 'dead' and were not eligible for belated renewals and instead fresh leases would have to be granted.

Parallely, the state government has also claimed that the law as amended in 2015 provides that all active leases granted before the commencement of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015 shall be deemed to have been granted for fifty years. This, they say, would mean Goa's mining leases which were converted to leases in 1987 should be "deemed to have

been granted for 50 years" which makes them valid till 2037.

The Mining Industry has been one of the major sources of revenue generation for the state and also a source of employment generation, the Goa government said.

"More than 17% of the population of the state of Goa is directly or indirectly dependent on the mining industry... Direct revenue loss to the state is estimated to the extent of a minimum of ₹600 crores on an annual basis. The loss of income, employment, and closure of other forms of the peripheral economy which thrive on mining activity cannot be quantified at this stage but can be expected to be annually in the range of Rs. 240 Crore," the state government said.



# The Battle for Bengal is a Decisive Point in The War for 2024

**A win-win position for Mamata; Whether a victory or defeat on May 2 could catapult Mamata to the top of any 'Modi vs Who?' discourse. Is Congress now in danger of losing its position as the natural fulcrum for any anti-BJP formation?**



street fighter who will never shy away from a fight.

That is what brings us back to the curious case of the Congress' allies backing its rival in the Bengal polls. The BJP under Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, and JP Nadda has launched probably its fiercest fight yet in a state election.

The perception is building. If Mamata somehow manages to become a giant killer and thwart the might of the formidable BJP poll juggernaut, is she then the preferred choice to take on the Prime Minister in 2024? After all, the parallels between the political careers of Modi and Mamata are undeniable. Both are grass-root leaders, who toiled and fought for years to reach the top and then rule their respective States for over

a decade, eclipsing all opposition within the party.

In 2014, Narendra Modi was able to climb the next step and establish himself as a national force. Surely, Mamata aspires to do the same?

Mamata Banerjee ticks off almost all the boxes needed. She has built up a formidable CV, both as an administrator and as a politician. Her ideological opposition to Hindutva makes her a natural rallying point for anti-BJP voices. Critically, unlike the Gandhis, she has the support and the respect of her fellow regional players. All that could be needed to complete the list, is a resounding victory on May 2, which of course is much easier said than done. May 2, may settle the Battle for Bengal, but it could also see the first shots fired in the War for 2024.

On the first of March, Mamata Banerjee had a visitor in the form of Tejashwi Yadav. The RJD scion, fresh off a narrow loss to the BJP-JD(U) loss in Bihar just a few months ago, expressed his unequivocal admiration for Didi, calling it his 'duty' to strengthen the TMC's hands in West Bengal. But why wasn't Tejashwi backing his own Bihar allies - the Congress and Left - in Bengal? "Our alliance with Congress and Left is only in Bihar", he brushed off questions.

Two days later, another

Yadav jumped into the Bengal poll fray. SP's Akhilesh Yadav vowed to support Mamata, offering his party's support in campaigning for her. And 24 hours later, the Congress' two allies in Maharashtra - Shiv Sena and NCP - joined in with their endorsement of Mamata. Sanjay Raut even went as far as to call Mamata the 'real Bengal Tigress'. The message is clear. The Congress' friends are more than willing to dump it and place their bets on the current Chief Minister of West

Bengal. Mamata, and not any of the Gandhis, is emerging as the face of the Opposition.

To begin with, Rahul Gandhi is 'officially' not the Congress party chief, yet he belongs to the family which essentially controls the party. His position of power without accountability has rankled the 23 veterans within his party to publicly (and embarrassingly) revolt against the high command, right on the eve of elections.

Mamata Banerjee on the other hand is the

undisputed face of the party - both in Bengal and across the nation. Her leadership as well as her chosen successor is virtually unchallenged. More importantly, Mamata has delivered where Rahul has failed time and again - leading her party to victory in two Assembly elections and a dominant haul of seats in the two Lok Sabha elections. While Rahul is still struggling to shrug off the tag of a reluctant neta who tends to disappear on foreign tours in moments of crisis, Mamata is known and respected as a political

## FM Nirmala Sitharaman calls fuel price hike as 'dharamsankat' for Centre



New Delhi : Sitharaman on Friday Calling the inflated fuel price a 'dharamsankat' (dilemma) for the government, Finance Minister Nirmala

"Ideally, it is a matter which both States and Centre should discuss because it's not just Centre which has duties on petroleum price, States are also charging. When the Centre draws revenue, 41 percent of it goes to the state. This is a layered issue and therefore I would like to discuss together," said the Finance Minister while answering a media query during the 'Indian Women's press corps' event.

When asked if she had any discussion with states regarding the matter, the Finance Minister said, as of now, she did not have any discussion with any state government. Talking about the Union budget 2021, Sitharaman said the government in the Budget, ensured to divide the stimulus to understand where it should be going.

"Simultaneously we also made sure that we utilised the opportunity that the pandemic

presented us with by continuing with reforms," she said.

She added that the government also brought a consistent picture of what it is going to do in the next 20-25 years to benefit the Indian youth in this budget.

"For the next 25 years, it's important to have a policy-driven landscape to ensure that Indian youths' talent is realized in India. The Budget provides that landscape for entrepreneurs, businesses, by viewing

India as a hub of manufacturing," she added.

When asked about Income Tax raids at the properties of actress T a p s e e P a n n u , filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, and others, the Finance Minister said, "When it (raids) happens during a government, it was fine, and when it happens during this government, it's not. The same people were raided in 2013 too, it wasn't an issue, but it's an issue now."



# Cabinet Approves Amendments to MMDR Act to Reform Mining Sector



New Delhi : The cabinet has approved amendments to the MMDR Act. It had previously said in a report that the cabinet was likely to discuss amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act.

Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat declaration, the

government proposed to auction over 500 mineral mines for which it proposed amendments to the MMDR Act to bring about the reform for the mining sector.

The cabinet approved most of the proposed amendments to the MMDR Bill 2021 in January, but the Ministry of Mines

proposed supplementary provisions to the MMDR Bill in February. The draft bill would allow the selling of 50% of coal extracted from captive mines that were allotted before the commercial coal mining auction. Since the global energy transition is happening faster than predicted, the goal is to

**Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat declaration, the government proposed to auction over 500 mineral mines for which it proposed amendments to the MMDR Act to bring about the reform for the mining sector.**

optimize coal

Besides, the government has not seen as much enthusiasm in commercial coal auctions following the Supreme Court's deallocation of coal blocks in 2015 due to irregularities in allocation. Provisions have also been made to enable captive miners to sell up to 50% of their excavation in a year

to promote increased mineral output. Minerals such as bauxite, iron ore, chromite, limestone, and manganese would require captive miners to pay additional royalties to the states.

The proposal also included the fixation of additional sums for granting extensions to existing government mining leases to reduce

mining operations delays.

NMDC's Donimalai iron ore mines in Karnataka were previously closed due to expiry, and the central government had to intervene and negotiate with the state government to allow operations after increasing royalty from the company. In the case of iron ore, 1.5 times the current royalty would be charged, and an equal sum for other minerals, if a government company's expired mining lease is extended.

If state governments face difficulties, the central government has suggested allowing itself to hold mineral mine auctions.

## Komatsu aims to produce hydrogen-powered mining trucks

Tokyo : Komatsu, Japan's top construction equipment maker, plans to develop hydrogen power as an alternative to diesel for heavy-duty mining dump trucks, in a first for the industry, Nikkei has learned.

The company will start its hydrogen development program in 2021 and aims to have the trucks ready for practical use by 2030.

This effort to bring hydrogen power, which has made inroads into buses and road trucks, to mining comes as Komatsu customers seek to strip as much carbon dioxide emissions as they can from their business.

Some mining trucks run on electricity from overhead power lines, but most are diesel-powered. Using hydrogen as fuel has the benefit of letting zero-emissions trucks travel on routes where power lines do not reach.

Weighing 600 tons or more when loaded, mining

trucks are huge even compared with buses. In terms of hydrogen power, they present a different level of technical challenges than everyday fuel cell vehicles.

Costs pose another hurdle. Komatsu plans to procure fuel cells for its hydrogen-powered trucks from outside suppliers. Fuel cell stacks used in electricity generation are expensive. But mass production is expected to bring down their prices if they are used in a broader range of applications.

Mining equipment accounts for roughly 40% of Komatsu's sales. The rival of U.S.-based Caterpillar and China's Sany has taken steps to make itself more competitive in this field, including its 2017 acquisition of American mining machinery maker Joy Global.

Given mining's importance, Komatsu needs to adapt to the industry's shift away from fossil fuels.

Industry players seek

to cut CO2 emissions across their operations by eliminating fossil fuel use during extraction and generating electricity from renewable sources. This fits with a global trend toward reducing carbon emissions over a product's lifetime, from resource extraction to disposal.

Some mining groups have unveiled plans for their hydrogen infrastructure. Anglo American will install 320 megawatts of solar power generation capacity near a platinum mine in South Africa. This output will be used to produce up to 1 ton of hydrogen a day.

Komatsu has set a goal of halving CO2 emissions from its construction and mining equipment by fiscal 2030, compared with fiscal 2010 levels. In one initiative, the company has teamed with a U.S. maker of commercial electric vehicles to produce electrified heavy machinery, looking to begin mass production as early as 2023.

## Restarting stalled mines can help achieve \$5 tln economy target: Agarwal

**Metals and mining magnate Anil Agarwal said around 500 mines in the country are currently not operational due to various disputes**

New Delhi : Metals and mining magnate Anil Agarwal on Tuesday said around 500 mines in the country are currently not operational due to various disputes, and restarting them would help achieve the target of India becoming a USD 5 trillion economy.

Agarwal, chairman of Vedanta Resources, was speaking at an ASSOCHAM session on 'Future of Manufacturing in India'.

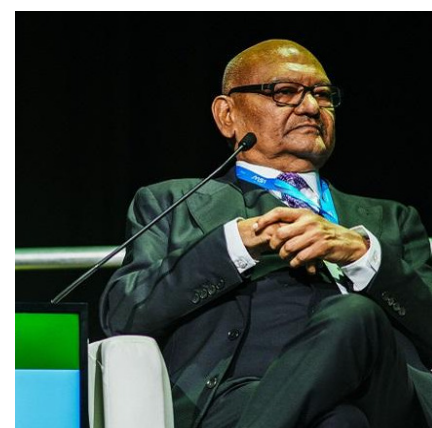
"The maximum revenue comes from the natural resources. Today we are just at the tip of the iceberg... We have today 500 mines which (are) not operating for some dispute.

"Let the production goes on. Let the production be doubled. If the production is doubled, there is no question we will not have our 5 trillion dollar target..." he said.

Agarwal also pitched for "self-certification" as seeking clearances took years.

"You make a huge penalty if we don't follow the norms but going through the process of getting clearances takes years. Somebody wants to increase the production, that itself takes years of time.

"(Through) self-certification, people



can increase their production to at least to double....," he said.

Agarwal also said "phenomenal" wealth would be generated if 20 divestments happen yearly, unlike the present one or two every year.

"The kind of wealth which you will get will be phenomenal," he said.

Advocating privatisation, he said, "nowhere in the world government runs the business."

Stating that the country's discoms were not operating well, Agarwal pitched for their privatisation and digitalisation.



# China wants to wipe out Uyghurs, committing genocide in Xinjiang: US report



New Delhi, March 9: From sexual abuse, illegal detentions to forced birth control, China is allegedly carrying out a genocide against its Uyghur population in Xinjiang province, a new report by a US-based think-tank has said.

According to the Washington DC-based Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, China is in breach of the 1948 United Nations' Genocide Convention, which the country has signed along with 151 nations. It is the first time an independent, non-governmental organisation has analysed the allegations of genocide in Xinjiang.

First made public by CNN, the report has been authored by more than 50

global experts on international law, genocide, China's ethnic policies, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

The report says there's enough evidence to prove that the Chinese state intends to destroy the ethnic community in whole or in substantial part. It adds that China is guilty of all five counts, which Article II of the Genocide Convention states constitute genocide.

The five include killing members of a group, causing serious bodily harm, inflicting damage that can severely affect one's life, imposing childbirth control measures on the group, and finally,

transferring children of the group to another.

The Uyghurs number 12 million in the North-Western region of Xinjiang and are predominantly Muslim. They speak their language, similar to Turkish, and identify more with Central Asian countries. According to the report, when Chinese President Xi Jinping declared a war on terror, he brought Uyghur-dominated areas to the frontline of the war.

The report adds that this was followed by high-level officials giving orders to "wipe them out destroy them root and branch," and "break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins." They also allegedly likened the mass internment of Uyghurs to the "eradication of tumors". The report also alleges

that Han Chinese cadres reside in Uyghur homes as "monitors" and the state often coerces and actively promotes Han-Uyghur marriage.

Increasing detention centers

The report also alleged that Uyghurs are being sent to internment camps where they are being held in inhumane conditions.

"Uyghurs have been expelled from their homes and sent to internment camps en masse, where they are deprived of adequate food, clothing, medical care, and shelter, and often only then released directly into forced labor schemes," reads the report. "Sleep deprivation, starvation, and unsanitary, dangerous, and overcrowded conditions are commonly reported in the camps."

According to the report, 1-2 million people have been allegedly detained in as many as 1,400 extrajudicial internment facilities across Xinjiang. According to a first-hand account, sexual abuse and rape of Uyghur women have also become commonplace under the detentions. The report also claims that researchers have verified over 380 detention sites across XUAR that were either newly built or have significantly expanded since 2017.

"While the (Chinese)

government claims the new compounds are designed for 'vocational education', satellite imagery and analysis, government documents, and first-hand accounts demonstrate that they are managed as prisons with varying levels of security," reads the report.

The authors also claim to have accessed leaked reports that detail ludicrous grounds for detention in Xinjiang such as "being young" as in "born after the 1980s", "being generally untrustworthy", "generally acting suspiciously", "having complex social ties," "having improper (sexual) relations", and "birth policy violations". The detention centers and internment centers are also running on institutionalised forced labor, where detainees are transferred to work in cotton fields adjacent to camps or hundreds of kilometers away in Eastern China, the report claims.

Furthermore, 135 forced labor factories have been identified near the detention camps.

"Uyghur detainees within the detention sites are systematically tortured, subjected to sexual violence, including rape, and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, deprived of their basic

human needs, and severely humiliated," the report says.

The Chinese Foreign Minister had on 7 March denied the allegations, saying that the charges of genocide against China are "ridiculously absurd" and "a complete lie".

Forced birth control

The report further states that China has subjected Uyghur women to forced birth control. According to the report, between 2017 and 2018, the percentage of infertile Uyghur women had increased to 124 percent. In 2018, 80 percent of all IUDs (intrauterine devices) in China were placed in the Uyghur region, a 77.5 percent increase from four previous years, the report adds.

"Government documents from 2019 demonstrate plans for a campaign of mass female sterilization in rural Uyghur regions, targeting 14 and 34 percent of all married women of childbearing age in two Uyghur counties in that year alone, with funding for these XUAR programs increasing," says the report. In September 2020, the XUAR Government had even sent a letter to CNN attributing a dramatic drop in the region's birth rate from 15.88 per 1,000 people in 2017 to 10.69 per 1,000 people in 2018 to "the comprehensive implementation" of the family planning policy.

From Page-1

## LPG price...

2014 and January 2016, the government had raised excise duty on petrol and diesel on nine occasions to take away gains arising from plummeting global oil prices.

Data provided by Dharmendra Pradhan

The tax collected on the two fuels was Rs 52,537 crore in 2013, which rose to Rs 2.13 lakh crore in 2019-20. This swelled further to Rs 2.94 lakh crore in the first 11 months of the current fiscal year. The government currently levies Rs 32.90 per liter excise duty on petrol and Rs 31.80 a liter on diesel.

Excise duty on petrol was Rs 17.98 a liter in 2018 and Rs 13.83 on diesel. The duty on petrol rate was hiked by Rs 11.77 per liter and that on diesel by Rs 13.47 a liter in those 15 months. The government had cut excise duty by Rs 2 in October 2017, and by Rs 1.50 a year later. It raised excise duty by Rs 2 per liter in July 2019. Excise duty was again raised in March 2020, by Rs 3 per liter each. In May that year, the government hiked excise duty on petrol by Rs 10 per liter and on diesel by Rs 13 a liter.

## Mamata should ...

Suvendu Adhikari has also accused Mamata of chanting the wrong mantra before the crowd. He said that Mamata is resorting to such tactics only to gain political mileage ahead of the polls. He said that the people of Nandigram will teach her a lesson and exuded confidence that the BJP will form the next government in the eastern state. "Earlier the CM insulted Lord Ram more than once. Then, she wrongly recited the Saraswati Mantra. Again she has recited the Chandipath wrongly at a public meeting," he tweeted. Reciting Chandi's path is no ordinary job, only experts can do it. Even the experts who have lost their teeth do not recite the Chandi path in fear of being unable to deliver the right sound. It is strongly believed that one who wrongly recites Chandi's path is severely punished and Mamata's getting injured the same day might be the consequence of that. Nandigram will go to the polls in the second phase on April 1.



# Uttarakhand bugaboo: Except ND Tiwari, no other CM could complete 5-year term

**The state has seen chief ministers change almost ten times in the past 20 years since it was carved out of Uttar Pradesh in 2000.**

Dehradun : Politicians across the political spectrum believe that whosoever lives in the CM house in Dehradun is not able to complete his five-year tenure in the state.

With Trivendra Singh Rawat's resignation as the chief minister a year before the completion of his five-year tenure, the belief has got stronger in the state's political circle.

The state has seen chief ministers change almost ten times in the past 20 years since it was carved out of Uttar Pradesh after a violent agitation in 2000.

The only chief minister to complete his tenure of five years was Congress' Narayan Dutt Tiwari who became the chief minister in 2002.

Indira Hridayesh, leader of opposition said it was Vijay Bahuguna first who had lived in the CM house and couldn't complete his term. "When Harish Rawat became the CM, due to fear of the bugaboo, he didn't live in the CM House. He lived in the Bijapur area in Dehradun. ND Tiwari was the only CM who completed his five-year term and also stayed there. Due to the fear of this bugaboo, many

CMs didn't live there. But Trivendra Singh Rawat chose to live in the CM house. I think some Vastu experts had also been brought to check it in the past," she said.

Historian Shekhar Pathak said though many believe in this bugaboo, the fact is that it was the weakness of the respective governments that the chief ministers couldn't complete their terms.

"There is another jink that may be talked about now. After the Kedarnath tragedy in 2013, Vijay Bahuguna lost his post of CM and now post the



Chamoli tragedy the same has happened with Rawat. But these are just speculations. People, including politicians, try to see a pattern in such developments," he said.

Professor MM Semwal,

a political analyst from Garhwal University, said this jinx has been always talked about in state politics as no CM except for ND Tiwari could complete his five-year term. "But from a logical point of view, I don't

think we can link political developments to such superstitions. All these major political changes in the state over the years have political reasons. One house cannot affect or bring such changes," he said.

## What is the costly mistake made in Indian history?



When Vijay Mallya took over the business, he was just 27 years old. At the time of his father's death, his company 'United Breweries' (which owns many brands including Kingfisher) was in a bad condition. Three out of 5 factories of Kingfisher beer were closed, and hard liquor (whiskey, rum, etc.) sales were no different.

When Vijay Mallya took charge of the company, he not only restarted 3 closed factories in the first 5 years but also opened 2 new factories in South India. After this Vijay Mallya started some new brands in

Hard Liquor and bought some new brands and made them super hit. Some of the brands have names like - Royal Challenge, DSP, Officers Choice, Antiquity, etc.

Apart from Kingfisher in beer, Mallya bought London Pilsner and Haywards 5000 and made them superhit.

Mallya made Kingfisher a tremendous brand, further strengthening the Kingfisher brand by investing in Kingfisher Calendar, Formula 1 Racing, Cricket (IPL), etc.

Along with this, Mallya also managed chemical business 'Mangalore

Fertilizers' and paint business 'Berger Paints'.

At the age of 27, Vijay Mallya made the company of 20 crores in his hand, a 25,000 crore mega empire in just 3 years! At the age of 30.

But then he made a mistake, due to which his 25 years of hard-earned business was left out of his hands and now Vijay Mallya, who was in debt, has been declared a fugitive, and you know what his condition is.

His investment in the airline business was a blunder.

Airlines are an industry that operates on very small margins. And this is a very serious business where profit margin comes from saving money at every little place and working in a very excellent manner.

But Vijay Mallya got involved in promoting Kingfisher's brand by putting the responsibility of Kingfisher Airlines on the company's CEO and other management. Now put the responsibility on

management, but still, he managed to leave Air India behind, Kingfisher started flying on non-profitable routes, passengers started getting one-to-one facilities like these flight entertainment, free miles and every passenger A set of headphones was also found to carry with him.

Expenses are very high and earnings are very low, that is why Kingfisher Airlines has never been able to profit.

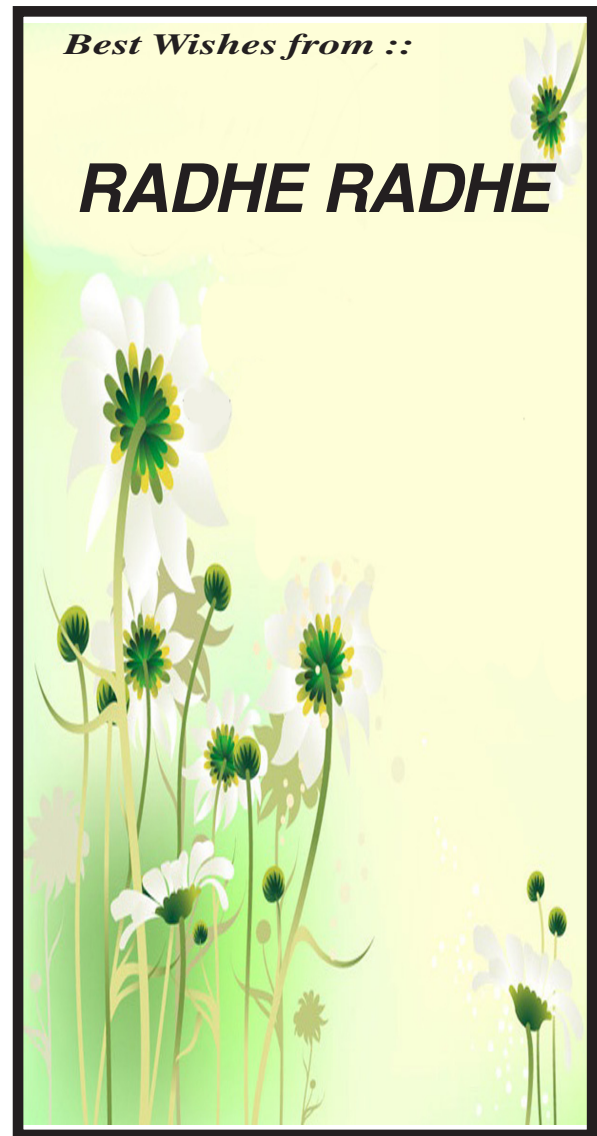
Loan increased, then Indian Oil refused to give jet fuel to Kingfisher. It was recently that they were not able to pay the parking fees of their planes. The pilot and the rest of the staff did not receive salaries for 10 months and all started resigning.

Then banks also stopped lending.

And after seeing everything went out of hand. United Breweries got out of hand due to Kingfisher Airlines. This is one of the few costly mistakes made in Indian history.

*Best Wishes from ::*

**RADHE RADHE**





# Bollywood's imbued affairs with Lutyens

## Shashi Tharoor



This charismatic MP from Congress had a controversial love affair with his late wife Sunanda Pushkar. Both were divorced when they met and decided to tie the knot. He landed in a media storm when a Pakistani journalist Mehr Tarar confessed her love for him which was denied by a joint statement from Shashi Tharoor and Sunanda Pushkar. Just a few days after the saga, Sunanda Pushkar was found murdered in a hotel room. The case is still unresolved.

## NT Rama Rao



Though most political love affairs end in ugly feuds and drama, some will genuinely warm your heart. Friends, family, and followers were shocked when three-term chief minister Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao confessed his love for Lakshmi Parvathi. She is a Telugu writer who was co-authoring his biography. The two fell in love during the process and decided to marry. He took this decision at the age of 70.

## Nagma with Saurav Ganguly



Reportedly, Ganguly met actress Nagma in 1999 in London, when he was already married to Dona Ganguly (his childhood sweetheart). However, a secret affair began, and in 2001 reports claimed that the two were spotted at a temple together (and had allegedly even tied the knot).

## ND Tiwari

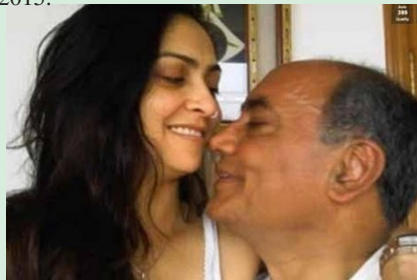
Former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand created sensational headlines when he was allegedly caught in bed with three women at his official residence in Raj Bhavan. This was followed by a police complaint that he was sexually abusing the girls and misusing his power. Though Tiwari apologized, he claimed that he has been framed. The dust just settled on this matter when Rohit Shekhar filed a paternity suit against Tiwari. He claimed that Tiwari was his biological father, the court ordered a DNA mapping. After that, it was proved that he is indeed Rohit's biological father. He not only accepted



that but also married Rohit's mother at the age of 88 whom he previously refused to acknowledge.

## Digvijaya Singh

This former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh found himself amidst controversy when his intimate images with T.V Journalist Amrita Rai were leaked. As soon as the matter became public knowledge, he accepted the affair and eventually got married to Amrita in 2015.



## Amar Singh

This former Samajwadi Party leader found himself in the middle of a controversy after a telephonic conversation was leaked. The conversation between this politician and Bollywood actress Bipasha Basu was sexually explicit.

## Omar Abdullah



When he decided to divorce his wife of 17 years, speculations were made that the reason is Nidhi Razdan. She is a journalist who met the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister during her state visit for purpose of reporting. Abdullah denied the claims of an affair.

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Our correspondents at

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Editorial office

LIG 491, Neeladri Vihar PH II, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar 751021, R.O: Uplands, Banspani, Joda 758034, Odisha  
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