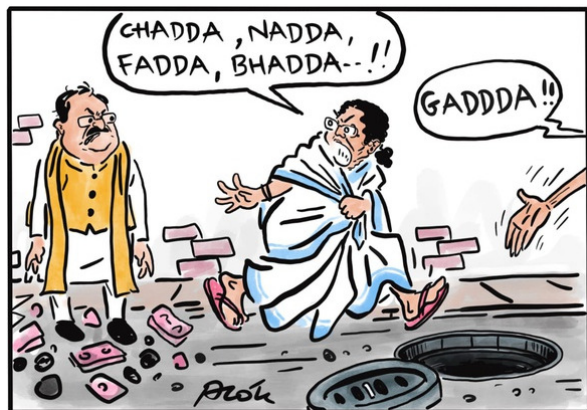


Who will win the West Bengal election, BJP or TMC?



I wasn't a Bengali so they could communicate with me without fear. After the polling day, their tone changed and they started

**Answered by
a non-Bengali
outsider in
March 2021**

I was traveling in Tram in Kolkata and my friends were discussing the poor conditions of Trams and Tramline. We were still using the Trams gifted by the British without any upgrade. The fellow locals, mostly old people, traveling with us asked us to keep the voice low. I

mean why? Were we in North Korea? FEAR among Bengali people was high and it was infused in them from the last 10+30=40 years.

During the 2014 general elections, many people around me, including my colleagues, were firm about voting for Modi. As

talking against BJP and in support of TMC. Why? Because they sensed that BJP didn't perform well, TMC goons were keeping an eye on pro-BJP sentiments, they had no savior in Bengal from BJP (Rajiv Sinha alone wasn't sufficient). FEAR again killed BJP's chance. (P-14)

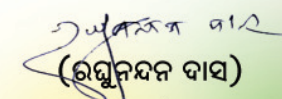


**ହୋଲି ପର୍ବ ଅବସରରେ
ବାର୍ତ୍ତା**

DADLS-83

ରଙ୍ଗ ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦର ପର୍ବ ହୋଲି । ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ସ୍ୱତ୍ୱଭାବ, ସଂପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ଓ ଭାଇଚାରାର ଅନନ୍ୟ ସନ୍ଦେଶ ବହନ କରୁଥିବା ଏହି ପର୍ବ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ମୁଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ସମସ୍ତ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜ୍ଞାପନ ସହ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ସୁଖ ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି କାମନା କରୁଛି ।

ପବିତ୍ର ହୋଲି ପର୍ବ କରୋନା କଟକଣା ଅନୁପାଳନ ପୂର୍ବକ ପାଳନ କରିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଛି ।


(ରଘୁନନ୍ଦନ ଦାସ)
ଜଳସଂପଦ, ସୂଚନା ଓ ଲୋକସମ୍ପର୍କ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

OIPR-15001/13/0135/2021



सत्यमेव जयते

ମାନ୍ୟବର ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳଙ୍କ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

DADLS-83

ଆନନ୍ଦ, ହର୍ଷ ଓ ଉଲ୍ଲାସର ପର୍ବ ପବିତ୍ର ହୋଲି ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି । ଏହି ପର୍ବ ରାଜ୍ୟ ତଥା ରାଜ୍ୟ ବାହାରେ ରହୁଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କର ଜୀବନରେ ସୁଖ, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଭରିଦେଉ, ଏତିକି କାମନା କରୁଛି ।

ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ସରକାରଙ୍କ କୋଭିଡ଼ ମାର୍ଗଦର୍ଶିକା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱସଂପନ୍ନ ଭାବରେ ହୋଲି ପର୍ବ ପାଳନ କରିବା ।

ଶଶେଶୀଲାନି

(ଗଣେଶୀ ଲାଲ)

ମାନ୍ୟବର ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/13/0135/2021



**ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ
ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା**

ରଙ୍ଗ ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦର ପର୍ବ ହୋଲି ଅବସରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ପ୍ରିୟ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭକାମନା ଜଣାଉଛି । ହୋଲି ଉତ୍ସବକୁ ନିରାପଦ ଭାବରେ ପାଳନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯତ୍ନବାନ ହେବେ ବୋଲି ଆଶା କରୁଛି ।

ଏହି ପବିତ୍ର ଅବସରରେ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୋନା ସଂକ୍ରମଣ ରୋକିବା ପାଇଁ କୋଭିଡ଼ ନିୟମାବଳୀ କଡ଼ାକଡ଼ି ଭାବରେ ପାଳନ କରନ୍ତୁ । 'ଘରେ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ', ନିଜକୁ, ନିଜ ପରିବାରକୁ ଏବଂ ବନ୍ଧୁ ପରିଜନଙ୍କୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ରଖନ୍ତୁ ।

ନବୀନ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ମାତୃକୀ
(ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ)

ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/13/0135/2021

Ambassador of Burundi calls for cooperation in agriculture, mining

Bhubaneswar, March 27: The Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi in India, Stella Budiriganya on Saturday called for increased cooperation between India and her country, particularly in areas of mining, agriculture, and food processing. "Universities in India are research-oriented and we are open for collaboration in different areas including mining, agriculture, and food processing as also education and research,"



Budiriganya, on a two-day visit to Odisha, said at the Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA).

The Ambassador, who exchanged ideas and views with SOA Vice-

Chancellor Prof. Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof. Pradipta Kumar Nanda, Deans of different faculties and other officials, during her visit to the Deemed to

be University, said she was impressed by the emphasis laid on research by SOA and appreciated the quality of education.

When informed that students from 13 different countries were studying in SOA, she said those from Burundi should also come to this university which was taking good care of foreign students and had a secure environment. Universities in India should open their offices in Burundi, she said.

Ms. Budiriganya also

lauded India's progress saying the country had displayed its ability by coming up with vaccines against Covid-19.

Prof. Nanda presented an overview of the academic and research activities at SOA while Dr. Nachiketa Sharma, Director, International Relation and Admission, spoke about the countries from which students had joined the university to study in different courses.

Prof. Mahapatra said SOA was a multi-

disciplinary and research-oriented university that played a stellar role in combating the Covid-19 pandemic in Odisha by successfully operating four stand-alone Covid Hospitals and two Covid Care Centres run by the government having more than 2200 beds.

The Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital, SOA's faculty of medicine, played a part in the development of Covaxin, the vaccine against Covid-19, he said.

Centre Rubbishes Odisha's Claim Of Erratic Vaccine Supply



New Delhi : The Centre today dismissed the Odisha government's allegations of insufficient and erratic supply of Covid-19 vaccines to the State that is hindering its daily vaccination target.

In a letter to PK Mohapatra, the Additional chief secretary of Odisha Health Department, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan stated that 34,46,760 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been supplied to Odisha as of March 27.

"A total of 21,67,956 eligible beneficiaries have been vaccinated which translates to consumption of about 22,97,431 doses

resulting in a balance of 11,49,329 doses available with the State," he stated in the letter.

Bhushan further said that the Centre is constantly reviewing and allocating vaccines based on the progress of vaccination in all States/UTs including Odisha.

Despite the available stocks, the Centre has further allocated an additional supply of 5,48,250 doses which is expected to reach the State on March 28, the Union Health Secretary added. "Based on these facts, you would agree that the arguments of discretion and erratic supply of vaccine as made in your letter is not tenable," the letter read.

Following Bhushan's

clarification, BJP came down heavily on the State government for misleading the fact on vaccine supply.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, in a series of tweets, stated that he had discussed the matter with Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan who assured him of adequate availability of vaccines.

Meanwhile, BJP State spokesperson Golak Mohapatra demanded an apology from the Additional chief secretary PK Mohapatra for misleading people over the availability of vaccines.

"It seems that the letter had been written by the general secretary of a party. He might have written such a letter without the knowledge of the Chief Minister. The letter aims at creating panic. He should immediately tender an apology," Mohapatra demanded.

Odisha increased the power tariff by 30 paise per unit

Bhubaneswar : The Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC) on Saturday increased the power tariff by 30 paise per unit for fiscal 2021-22. The hike in power tariff will come into effect from April 4, 2021.

The OERC approved the Annual Revenue Requirements and Tariffs of different power utilities (Discoms).

The commission passed orders on retail supply tariff of Discoms, bulk supply, price of GRIDCO, transmission tariff of OPTCL, generation tariffs of OHPC and OPGC, and SLDC charges for the year 2021-22.

As per the order, the tariff of BPL and irrigation consumers would remain unchanged and there would be no change in monthly minimum fixed charge, demand charge, and meter rent. However, the OERC approved the proposal to hike by 30

paise per kwh/kvah in energy charge for consumers in all other categories.

This amounts only to a 5.60% rise in the overall

vehicles shall be treated as GP category. The rural LT domestic consumers shall get 5 paise per unit rebate in addition to existing prompt payment



retail supply tariff.

As per the decision, 2% rebate over and above normal rebate shall be allowed on the bill to the LT domestic and single-phase general purpose category for consumers only who pay through digital means.

This rebate shall apply to the current month's bill is paid in full. Also, a 2% rebate shall be allowed to all prepaid consumers on prepaid amount.

As per the order, the charging of electric

rebates who draw their power through the correct meter and pay the bill in time. There is a rise of 3 paise per unit in transmission tariff raising it to 28 paise per unit from 25 paise per unit.

However, the average tariff of OHPC has been reduced by 2.3% from 91.39 paise to 89.28 paise per unit. The average annual BSP has been revised to 296.29 paise per unit for fiscal 2021-22 as against 287.70 paise per unit in FY 2020-21.

'Know-all' system heaps on tragedies, slowdown, poverty, policy crisis



Prof. Shivaji Sarkar

Former HOD in English journalism in IIMC, Delhi

The human tragedies refuse to die. The triple tragedy of the economy - note ban, convoluted multiple tax system, and the panicky lockdown and to add it a penalizing system being built into the system is adding to the tragedies, deepening of poverty, and an unprecedented policy crisis.

The state and central governments are in the debt trap. The people are being forced to manage in a cash-crunch economy with high doses of multiple taxes, tolls, cess, user fees, penalties, wage-job losses, and severe inflation. The state system is becoming usurious. And after a year of lockdown marked by trekking of at least 10 crore people with their kids crisscrossing highways and

expressway across India is being forgotten in the din of election promises. Some of them like Berjon Pahadia walked for seven months to cover 1200 km from Delhi to back to Jharkhand. Most of them till today do not have a job. A few are sustaining on MGNREGA or food doles.

The working class is not only treated with contempt and apathy. About 68 percent of the workers, CMIE says, had a fall in income between December 2019 and August 2020. Women were worst hit, particularly in the lower strata, and 56 percent of them remained jobless at least till December 2020. Earnings had reduced to half and a large number of people have cut food consumption. No wonder India ranks 94 among 107

countries in the Global hunger index 2020 and is in a serious category with 27.2 points.

In the melee of an artificially sponsored pandemic children and youth are the worst sufferers as their life has come to a standstill because their online schools, colleges, and universities are if not dysfunctional, not functional either. The private budget schools, over 20,000 or more in UP alone, have put down shutters causing loss to about five lakh low-paid teachers and others because of lockdown and the students cannot pay the fees.

It does not stop there. Most MSMEs are still gasping and the majority of them are yet to be operational. It has become an electoral issue in Tamilnadu, where nine lakh MSMEs had been shut during the lockdown. Many are hit because the migrant labor force is yet to return and raw material, fuel prices, and transportation costs have spurted.

Those who feel that online education is a success live in utopia. Except in some elite schools in metros, it has not succeeded because the students do not have a smartphone or share one phone among three to four siblings if at all there is internet connectivity in the rural hinterlands. The rising data cost is yet another deterrent.

Online is the biggest

issue because net connectivity is more illusion than reality in three-fourths of the country. A digital system forced during the lockdown is not helping India but giving rise phenomenally to cyber phone frauds and costs on the families.

The farmer is piqued by the rising cost of DAP fertilizer by Rs 300 a bag even as overall costs of farm inputs are increasing along with the operational cost of diesel pump sets or other equipment due to continuous rise in petro prices causing a chain reaction on prices of all commodities. It is an irony that crude prices are falling but domestic petrol prices are being hiked.

So are many metals including steel prices, which are being continuously increased by private producers. The industry and individuals are into trouble as the moratorium granted on loans were not being honored till a few days ago the Supreme Court clears the uncertainty over loan moratorium and bad loan classification.

Even the rupee is weakening and the stock market is in distress as the benchmark Sensex plunges and the broader market is falling amid fears of fresh lockdown in India and across the globe and delay in economic recovery. Globally stocks are in a bear hug as supposed covid19 cases are stated to be increasing. It speaks

of poor industrial and financial sector recovery.

The gold and silver are losing their shin every day. Since the January high of Rs 50,350, gold has plummeted to Rs 44,350 and silver to Rs 64,607.

India needs a caring society, a humane government, and a system that can sustain all. But instead, the system has become oppressive with the forced introduction of schemes like fastag, doubling the charges on non-fastag vehicles, unnecessary HSRP car plates through an official diktat, severe hike in rail fares, and reduction of train services for no rhyme or reason. These are becoming inflationary for goods, food items, edible oils, and even carmakers have increased the prices as their transportation costs rise.

Off and on irrational localized or regional lockdowns, penalties for not wearing masks, and harassment by the administration for e-passes or sudden checks for corona or similar whimsical methods have brought the economy and society under severe strain as rent-seeking becomes a norm.

Forcing a new labor code amid a distressing economic system, a 12-hour shift, changing wage rules and conditions without a discussion have accentuated the problems. Penalizing people has become a passion. The latest is to

announce nullifying of PAN card if it is not linked to Aadhar as also a penalty of Rs 1000 and increased income tax action on some ten-year-old violations.

Also is introduced a vehicle scrapping policy causing severe distress to individuals, who spend a lifetime of their investments and truck operators.

The oppressive methods to harass citizens already hassled by an illusory disease add to the woes.

While some industries like pharmaceuticals, vaccines and IT are thriving, overall the entire society is crumbling due to rules and orders issued at the whims and fancies of the administration as also fresh lockdowns, say Nomura and Axis bank economists.

The situation is critical and the remedies are eluding. A distressed government is in a quandary. Each of its methods is stuck in poor finances, poorer vision, and the quagmire of rules. Unless the system takes a practical and humane view, turns the NITI Ayog into a functional planning body and parliamentarians raise the right issues the country may get into a deeper crisis. Yes, institutions have become less functional and must be revived through a vibrant discussion that now is shunned. The arrogance of a 'know-all' system has to come to an end.

President Inaugurates Super Speciality Hospital In Rourkela



President said the Rourkela Steel Plant has made conscious efforts to bring about changes in healthcare, education, culture, sports, and other sectors besides playing a significant role in industrial development.


Rourkela : A strong socio-economic structure is necessary along with industrial advancement for the progress of a country, President Ram Nath Kovind said Sunday while inaugurating a super specialty hospital of Rourkela Steel Plant. Asserting that Rourkela Steel Plant, a unit of state-run SAIL, has been sensitive in this regard, the President said, it has made conscious efforts to bring about changes in healthcare, education, culture, sports, and other

sectors besides playing a significant role in industrial development. Pointing out that Rourkela and the western region of Odisha were deprived of super-specialty medical facilities, SriKovind said that about six years ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation for developing the Ispat General Hospital into such a medical institution. This hospital would not only cater to the super-specialty medical needs of Odisha but also adjoining

areas of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, the President said. Good governance has two important pillars ~CHECK~ education and healthcare - and both of them have contributed immensely to the development of human civilisation, SriKovind said. "In the past years, the importance of healthcare has received worldwide attention. COVID-19 pandemic has shown its macabre form across the world. In this difficult time,

our medical fraternity has fought an extraordinary battle against an invisible and unknown enemy," SriKovind said. Praising the medical teams of SAIL for their commendable work of protecting people by their tireless efforts, the President said, "The nation would always be indebted to them for the selfless services rendered by the healthcare community and their dedication to humanity." SriKovind also lauded the scientists for their tireless efforts, saying it was only through their persistent efforts that the biggest

vaccination drive in history has started in India. "India is not only becoming self-sufficient in manufacturing vaccines, but we are also providing vaccines to other countries free of cost or at a very reasonable price," he said. Highlighting that the pandemic has imparted many important lessons, he said, "One of the lessons is that as a nation, we must continue to strive to improve the healthcare system and make it equally accessible to all." "In recent times, we have invested a lot in primary health services, and our

objective behind this is to expand healthcare coverage to reach underserved people and far-flung areas," he said. Improvement in people's access to secondary and tertiary healthcare is equally important, he said, adding this is also being taken care of under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. The newly inaugurated 200-bedded hospital has facilities for neurology, neurosurgery, cardiology, cardiothoracic and vascular surgery, and nephrology. 

President Ram Nath Kovind At NIT Rourkela Convocation

Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Union Minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan, and state Health and Family Welfare Minister N K Das have also attended the convocation at NIT Rourkela



Rourkela : President Ram Nath Kovind visits the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela in Odisha today,

March 21, to attend the 18th convocation ceremony of the institute as the chief guest. NIT Rourkela convocation

begins at 10 am and the president delivered the convocation address. Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Union Minister for

Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan, and state Health and Family Welfare Minister N K Das have attended the convocation at NIT Rourkela. DSc awardees, gold medal winners, silver medal winners, and distinguished alumnus awardees attended the convocation in person to receive their degrees and medals, the institute said. "The medal-winning graduates are required to produce a copy of negative COVID-19 test (RT-PCR) report

conducted within last 72 hours before the time of entry at the Main Gate of NIT Campus," NIT Rourkela said. Recently, NIT Rourkela and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) signed an agreement to set up a Space Technology Incubation Centre (S-TIC) in the institute campus. This collaboration with ISRO will open up new opportunities for research and development as well as space start-ups, an NIT Rourkela official had said. 

CM praises the villagers for creating mangrove forest in 25 acres of barren land




Kendrapada :The coastal Kendrapada district is prone to natural calamities along with land erosion, to protect the village from land erosion, the villagers of Badakot village under Koilipur GP of Rajnagar block converted 25 acres of land into mangrove forest to protect their village from land erosion. The village Khirokot was submerged by the sea in the 1970s due to heavy erosion and Nature's Fury. As a result, the villagers were forced to shift to the nearby Badakot village, located about 5 kilometers away. The village, which is located between the mouth of the sea and the brackish river, started witnessing the same fate. The local environmentalists made the villagers understand the importance of mangrove forests and encouraged them to create them in the coastal stretch to save their village from natural calamities from Nature's Fury and sea erosion. "We came to know from the local environmentalist that mangroves acted as a bio-shield. Mangrove forest plays an important role in protecting the areas from the catastrophe like Cyclone, tsunami, along with maintaining ecological balance and controlling the environmental pollution as mangroves are the Earth's natural filtering system, capable of absorbing pollutants, carbon dioxide and store carbon in their sediments, thereby lessening the impacts of global warming", informed the villagers.

As the coastal Kendrapada district is among the six districts in the most vulnerable hotspots-namely Penthia, Gahirmatha, and Satabhya-that witness high erosion. Being aware of the importance of Mangrove from the environmentalist and forest personnel, The villagers, in 2008, formed Maa Khara Khai Luna jungle Surakhya Samiti.

The Samiti members together worked to create mangroves forest by taking the help of the forest department and the local environmentalist and had started the process of planting the mangrove saplings.

As the work gained momentum, fellow villagers, who were skipping from the afforestation program, also joined their hands in planting mangrove species. The villagers too remained watchful to provide their helping hand for creating mangrove forest.

Though they had planted about 15,000 saplings during the initial stage, they later have increased to more than 45,000 trees over the years. The sincere efforts of the villagers, who guarded the forest for several years to protect it from timber mafias. However, 12 years of consistent efforts to conserve and protect the mangrove afforestation scripted a success story as the mangrove forest covered over 25 acres of land with 32 types of mangrove species were in the forest. The mangrove forest has saved the village from land erosion too, stated the villagers with pride. Meanwhile, the grass started growing around the trees and weeds flourished, it became a rich source of fodder for cattle whereas the backwaters and river areas near the roots of mangroves became fishing zones and the villagers started generating a livelihood from it. The villagers now wake up to the green forest with birds chirping. It has also become popular for wildlife sightings, added villagers of Badakot. Now the land erosion has been stopped. Even, the cyclonic storm Fani in 2019 failed to cause any major damage to the village. In 2000, the area was completely barren, and now it has turned into 25 acres of massive dense mangrove forest. 

Tagged olive Ridley turtle return for laying to the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary zoological survey of India team tagged about 624 numbers turtles for study

Kendrapada : (Rajesh Kumar Behera) Much to the joy of turtle lover and researcher, the forest personnel found a tagged female olive ridley sea turtle, that was tagged more than a decade back, came to the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, the largest rookery of the species, for laying eggs. This proves that tagged female turtles are finding their way to Gahirmatha, where they were born more than a decade ago. So it has been ascertained that the turtles generally come to their favorite nesting place again and again for laying eggs at the golden beach of Gahirmatha.

The much-awaited mass nesting of endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles has been going on at Nasi-2 beach in Gahirmatha marine sanctuary, the favorite nesting place of endangered Olive ridley sea turtles. An estimated 2,03,335 female Olive Ridley sea turtles laid eggs in the last four days.

This year a three members team of researchers of Kolkata based-Zoological Survey of India have tagged around 624 numbers of female olive Ridley sea turtles, that came to the Nasi -2 beach for laying eggs, to ascertain the behavior, migratory route, and areas of foraging, informed DFO, Dash.

Tagging is most often done to obtain information on their reproductive biology, movements, and growth rates. Sea turtles

throughout the world are known to migrate thousands of kilometers between their nesting beaches and feeding grounds. The tagging helps researchers study the turtle's migratory route and areas of foraging. Tagging data also shows



how the turtles navigate waters across different areas.

There was a lack of information about turtles after they leave the coast of Odisha. Hence, there was a need for tagging and satellite telemetry to track their movements and enhance the protection of their habitats. The forest personnel with the help of WII researchers had fitted tags on several endangered olive ridley turtles in the past years in all the three major nesting sites - Gahirmatha, Rushikulya, and Devi beach to know their movement. Notably, the state forest department in collaboration with Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, earlier fitted tags on the flippers between 1998 and 2010. Sea turtles are also tagged to recognize individuals or cohorts for research purposes.

During the low tide period, the feral dogs generally strayed from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Abdul kalam Wheeler's Island to the golden beaches of Nasi II island, located near the establishment of DRDO,

migrate from their feeding ground to the breeding ground, mating occurs in the offshore waters. The endangered species are rarely turn up in such large numbers anywhere on the planet which comes en-masse to the golden beaches of Gahirmatha


after crisscrossing the waterbodies to feast the turtle eggs from the nests. The forest department takes measures to drive away from the straying dogs.

Among the nesting grounds in the state, Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is said to be the largest rookery for the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtle, which is protected under Schedule 1 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and accorded the highest protection like endangered tigers. Olive Ridley Sea turtle grows up to 75 centimeters (25 inches) in length. Turtle movements are found at the deep-sea of the Bay of Bengal in between October last week and November first week, even the mating pair generally found on mid of November at the deep sea.

During the breeding season, males and females

marine sanctuary for laying eggs, added official sources.

The endangered species mortality rate is so high that one egg out of every 1000 eggs laid, ultimately hatches and the hatchlings survive to become adult Olive Ridley.

With DRDO prohibiting visitors, the only handful of forest personnel on turtle protection duty have been engaged at the beach to witness this unique natural heritage. Turtle nests have been counted segment-wise at Nasi -II beach. The forest personnel has made 24 segments at Nasi-II for counting turtle's nest and engaged nearly 50 forest personnel to count the nest in each segment per hour. Each segment has been formed with 100-meter width, added Dash, the DFO of Rajnagar Mangrove forest and wildlife Division. 

Financial crunch hits operation of Oxygen plant at PRM Medical College and Hospital



Baripada : The Oxygen supply plant has a major role to provide oxygen through the pipeline system to each ward of Pandit Raghunath Murmu Government Medical College and Hospital in Mayurbhanj district for the treatment of patients is yet to be functional due to the apathy of the State Government. While a separate electric transformer is badly required for the operation of the oxygen supply plant has not been set up in the PRM MCH for the lack of financial support by the Government despite the authorities of PRM MCH

bring frequent notice to Government. Despite the authorities having a keen interest in the operation of the oxygen supply plant but a shortage of finance has been the roadblock. The installation work of the manifold oxygen pipeline system from the plant to all wards have been completed two months ago but no technical test is yet to be conducted due to the absence of power supply to the plant. The construction work of the oxygen plant and centralized oxygen supply in all wards of the PRM MCH had initiated during

the pandemic time when it was demanded by the public but the project is yet to be operational.

Satyanarayan Rana, a cardiac patient native of Ward No-6 under Baripada Municipality who was admitted to the medical college seven days ago and undergone treatment in male medicine ward, bed-no-8 said that shortage of oxygen supply made it difficult for the patient to get the emergency service. Medical sources said due to the demand of people and official intervention the installation work of the oxygen plant and

centralized oxygen supply had picked up the speed by MDD Medical Systems (India) Pvt. Ltd, even almost all work has been done but it yet to operate for the absence of power supply. As the medical college is situated not far away from West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar States, and district of Balasore and Keonjhar, most of the patients from these States and districts are getting medical support from the medical institution. So it will be an urgent need for the operation of the oxygen supplier service at the medical institution. BN Mohapatra the hospital superintendent said that the authorities of the medical college already brought notice to NESCO six months ago to install a transformer and power supply to the oxygen plant but the department demanded money. So, the matter was sent to the Government but it has not been addressed until now.

Tribal families forced to walk the extra mile to fetch drinking water

Baripada :-As the mercury rises to 37 degrees Celsius the drinking water scarcity also rises in many pockets in tribal-dominated Mayurbhanj district. The apathetic attitude of the concerned department is said to be the reason behind this. The villagers of Jharanasahi of Badakhamana GP under Udala Block of Mayurbhanj district where the women have to

water supply project commissioned just a few months later was defunct. Gita Singh and Mangal Singh the dwellers of the village expressed their distress that as there are no alternative sources of drinking water supply, they are forced to walk kilometers to fetch water from a pit. Chakradhar Singh, Zilla Parishad member said that



walk extra miles around one-and-half-kilometer to fetch a pitcher of drinking water as the government-sponsored water supply facilities were defunct. In such a situation, 74 families have been facing water scarcity after the rainy season as the groundwater level goes down. The government had sponsored a couple of solar systems-based water suppliers and a tube-well and the RWSS had been looking after the solar water suppliers. The tube-wells provided is proves no use. After three to four months then it could not function as the water level went down. It is completely defunct since two years ago. Similarly, a solar

despite his intimation to draw the attention of officials of RWSS and BDO of Udala frequently, the problem is not addressed by the officials for which the villagers of Jharanasahi continue to suffer. Devjani Bhuian the BDO of Udala said that a private agency was setting up two solar water supply systems in the village to cater to drinking water. She had already asked the agency to repair the projects immediately. To cater to the water crisis, she ordered the headmaster of the village's school to provide the key to the school gate and the villagers can bring water from the school tube-well initially.

Resentment for imposing of monthly tax over the collection of solid waste by the municipality

Baripada :Resentment is brewing among the residents of Baripada municipality in Mayurbhanj district after the municipality imposing a tax over the collection of solid waste. The tax system is imposing in different categories like household, small and large business holds but it is too high and the people decide not to accept the tax system. The house-hold and businessmen expressed their discontentment that the pandemic since last year has already broken the economic backbone of all people. Though a little



relaxation was imposed over the Covid-19 guideline economic condition has not recovered. When all are struggling with a crucial time of the pandemic, the new tax collection system over the collection of solid waste has to hit all. The municipality has imposed Rs.30 for each house-hold, Rs.100 for small businessmen like small

shops, tea, and coffee shops, and Rs.500 for big businessmen, families who are living in apartments and business establishments as they produce more solid waste. Lalit Kumar Das a resident of the town has opposed the tax system. He said that he had not a big businessman. He said the municipality has to collect solid waste and separate employees are for this job

and getting salacity from the government and different source of income of municipality. This system will affect the resident of the town. The District Congress Unit here had strongly protested over the enforcement of the tax system over the collection of solid waste. On Thursday, a group of Congress workers led by Baripada town president of Congress Jyoti Prakash Rath and Santanu Pal gave a memorandum to Executive Officer P Anvesha Reddy and demanded immediate withdrawal of the tax system from the people in the municipality.

Three Odias Feature In PM Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat'



New Delhi : Addressing on his weekly radio program Mann Ki Baat, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday praised three Odia social activists who excelled

in afforestation and promotion of COVID vaccination drive.


The three persons who featured in PM's speech are, Bijay Kabi from Kendrapara, Amaresh Samant from Paradip, and Pushpa Shukla from Bhubaneswar.

As per reports, Kabi has created mangroves on 25 acres of land just outside of his village, Badakot. He was

praised for his unrelenting effort for 12 years to grow the mangrove that is now playing a pivotal role in keeping the cyclones away from the village. Similarly, Samant from Paradip who is an engineer by profession has also contributed to the climate cause by creating several mini jungles in his area. The third person mentioned in Modi's speech

was Pushpa Shukla, who wrote a letter to the PM urging him to mention the excitement among the senior citizens regarding the ongoing COVID vaccination drive in his Mann Ki Baat speech.

Noting that India is currently running the world's largest vaccination program, PM Modi appealed to all countrymen

to take the Covid-19 vaccine and reiterated his 'dawaayibhikadayeebhi' mantra to avoid the spread of the pandemic. He recalled the month of March in 2020 when the question was looming all around when the Covid vaccine would come and said that he is happy to observe how elderly people are enthusiastic about getting the vaccine. 

Govt rejects Mehbooba Mufti's passport application

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mehbooba Mufti was refused a passport after J-K police opposed the issuance citing an "adverse report" against her.

Mufti took to Twitter to share the official notice and wrote: "Passport Office refused to issue my passport based on CID's report citing it as 'detrimental to the security of India.' " "This is the level of normalcy achieved in Kashmir since Aug 2019 that an ex-Chief Minister holding a passport is a threat to the sovereignty of a mighty nation," she added.

Passport Office refused to

issue my passport based on CID's report citing it as 'detrimental to the security of India. This is the level of normalcy achieved in Kashmir since Aug 2019 that an ex-Chief Minister holding a passport is a threat to the sovereignty of a mighty nation. The letter from the passport authorities mentioned that the additional director general of police, Jammu and Kashmir CID, has not recommended the issuance of a passport to Mufti. The letter adds that Mehbooba can appeal against the decision at a higher forum provided by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Mufti had already moved the high court for issuance of

the passport as she had applied for the document last year.

In the petition, Mehbooba said her passport expired on 31 May last year and accordingly she applied for issuance of a fresh passport before the authorities concerned on 11 December 2020.


Mehbooba's counsel submitted that according to instructions issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, the passport of an individual is to be issued within 30 days but in the instant case, despite lapse of three months, passport has not been issued to the petitioner due to the pending police verification.

She is currently being



investigated by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money laundering case.

Mufti was placed under detention along with several political leaders of Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019, when the Centre scrapped the special status of the erstwhile state and bifurcated it into Union territories.

She was released in October last year. 

Naveen Patnaik urges Centre to intervene over closure of Talcher thermal plant

Bhubaneswar : With the NTPC shutting down its 460 MW Talcher Thermal Power Station (TTPS) ahead of schedule, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik shot off a letter to the Centre seeking immediate intervention to



"I draw your immediate attention and request you to direct NTPC to address the state's concerns due to closure of TTPS and take steps for early execution of the Stage-III project," the letter said


address the concerns of the state.

In his letter to Union Minister of State for Power and Renewable Energy R K Singh, the Chief Minister said the closure of TTPS will have a severe direct and indirect impact on thousands of families and the local economy. "I draw your immediate attention and request you to direct NTPC to address the concerns of the state due to closure of TTPS and take steps for early execution of the Stage-III project. I assure you all support from the state government in this regard," the letter said.

Though NTPC proposed in 2010 to expand the capacity of the thermal power station by installing 2 supercritical

units of 660 MW each and the state government has given necessary approvals to the Stage-III expansion plan, NTPC is yet to execute the project, he said.

Expressing concern over the non-execution of the expansion plan, the Chief Minister said the state-run bulk power trading company GRIDCO has signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with NTPC in December 2010 for the 660 MW power plants.

He said TTPS is one of the oldest thermal power stations in the country and was set up by the state government. Stage-I (240 MW) was commissioned in 1968 and Stage-II (220 MW) in 1982. Later, NTPC acquired the plant in 1995. 

Odisha farmer builds electric car powered by solar panels


Karanja : A farmer in Mayurbhanj has built a four-wheeled electric vehicle that runs on a solar-powered battery. Sushil Agarwal from Karanja subdivision of Odisha's Mayurbhanj district built the car, powered by 850 Watts motor, 100 Ah/ 54 Volts of battery, and can run 300 km on a single charge. "I have a workshop at home. During COVID-19 lockdown, I began working there to create this. It can run for 300 km after full charge" claims Sushil Agarwal. He said the battery can be charged fully within 8 and a half hours. "It is a slow charging battery. Such batteries have a long life, It will last till 10 years," he



said. "All the work on this vehicle including motor winding, electrical fitting, and chassis work were done in my workshop with the help of two other mechanics and a friend who advised me on electric works," he added. It has been 3 months since he completed the work on the vehicle which is still in its initial frame. The idea to build his car hit him during the

boring lockdown days and he started assembling the parts one by one to construct his vehicle. "I was at my home when the lockdown restrictions were imposed. I knew soon the fuel prices will shoot up once the lockdown restrictions will be lifted. So I decided to build my car which could also keep me occupied," said Agarwal. He has built the vehicle just by

reading some books and watching youtube videos. Gopal Krishna Das RTO Mayurbhanj said, "I am glad to know that he has tried to design and manufacture a solar-battery-powered vehicle during the lockdown period.

Such environmentally-friendly vehicles that do not cause much pollution are the future of the automotive industry". "Society should encourage this type of invention. It is advisable to improve the design in consultation with Government of India's agencies like ARAI, CIRT to improve the safety, comfort, and efficiency of the vehicle so that it can be used on roads." 

Domesticating Police: His Master's Voice



Sirish C. Mohanty

Recent events expose the corrupt politics-police-crime network of Maharashtra. It also heralded an era of domestication of police to an unthinkable extent. The paradigm is not only a cause of concern for Maharashtra but the entire country. It may have started with 20 loose gelatin sticks found in an abandoned SUV outside industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence, but the case has blown up, and now, the fate of state home minister Anil Deshmukh hangs in the balance. Former Mumbai police commissioner, Param Vir Singh, has accused Maha HM Deshmukh of running an extortion racket by reportedly setting monthly

targets of ₹100 crores for certain policemen including Sachin Vaze, arrested for his role in the SUV case.

All sides are in the dock, for key questions remain unanswered. Why did Param Vir Singh only raise his voice against the home minister's reported corruption after being shunted out of his post? Why was Vaze, who had been suspended from the force for his role in an alleged custodial death, reinstated in 2020 and given an important post? Why is chief minister Uddhav Thackeray not ordering an immediate probe into the serious charges against Deshmukh and seeking his resignation? And why is

Sharad Pawar not acting against the home minister, who is his party's representative in the state's beleaguered coalition government?

But the issue goes beyond the immediate. No major party has focused on police reforms, a possible reflection of the complicity of all actors in systemic corruption. Until the police are kept insulated from political interference, whether in terms of postings or transfers or terms of their investigations, the two will forever remain in an unhealthy co-dependent relationship. In the context of politics and crime, there is a supply-side issue, where individuals and this can extend to mean corrupt

cops seek political protection to preserve and expand wealth, and a demand-side issue, where parties depend on illegal finance and this takes the form of extracting resources from state institutions such as the police and citizens. What is needed is a charter of wide-ranging reforms in the criminal justice system that could lead to quick judicial decisions such as on Vaze's role in the alleged custodial killing; instead, the matter is still in court, 18 years later- in the political finance regime- and in watchdog institutions, which should strongly enforce the law and expose wrongdoings. Now, the country must address the nexus of politics, police, and crime.

It is possible to mark the movements of birds flying high up in the sky, but it is not possible to ascertain the secret movements of politicians and police. So long they amassed wealth; they were praised rather than highly-placed, the process has its roots in the British Raj in India. Clive and

Warran Hastings (Hanging of Nanda Kumar in 1775) were found corrupt to an extent that they were tried by the parliamentary committee after their return to England. The corruption in the Indian system is inherited from the British Raj and now is fully grown not an easy job to weed out from the society.

The expansion of the economic activities during and after the Second World War opened new vistas of corruption in the country. The Bofors, HDW Submarine deal, Airbus deal, ABB Loco deal, Jain Hawala Racket, Sugar scam, Security scam, Urea scam, Fodder scam in Bihar and Tehelka tapes, etc., are a few instances. These scams, which surfaced were only the tip of the iceberg. The majority of these scams are related to "public expenditure" by the Central and State governments. Equally alarming are the cases of corruption in the collection of public revenue and arrears thereof. The corrupt practices in the realization of direct and

indirect taxes, non-recovery of loans from industrialists, money-laundering in the banking sector, etc., have resulted in the loss of thousands of crores to the national exchequer. Over the years, corruption has spread to the police as well. This was largely due to the steady expansion of the role of police given the enactment of several social and other legislations that are to be enforced by the police. "The success of any social legislation depends on the effectiveness of its enforcement and police have a protective as well as a promotional role to perform in this sphere". Corruption is a complex problem having its roots and ramifications in society as a whole. Hence, police have become a catalyst in most corruptions in the present day, and the politicians to continue the menace leave no stone unturned to domesticate the police, consequently now the police act without hesitation on 'His Master's Voice'.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Your timely article is the must-read for all young Kendujharians, especially, the activists. Your valuable, data-based article will serve three purposes by igniting the minds of Kendujharians.

- Educate
- Agitate, And
- Organize.

In the present scenario, the govt controlled by the corporate house will turn a deaf ear, & a blind eye to the sporadic meetings, Dharana, Bandh, etc. The power corridor must have already prepared the evil design how & when to sabotage the agitation as done in the past. To prolong, the uninterrupted, uncompromising, agitational program can go a long way in hammering the so-called "steel frame" of Bureaucracy dominated Govt.

As rightly suggested, the long dream of the steel plant of Kendujhar can easily be translated into reality, if the closed plants, like Kalinga Ironworks, Barbil, & Sponge iron plant, Palaspanga having all basic infrastructures be converted into Mega steel plant.

But unfortunately, as correctly commented by you, the govt has never been serious until now for the establishment of steel plant in Keonjhar.

The people of Kendujhar now ask this question to the party in power both state & center- why Uttam Galva,

Sterelite company abruptly left Kendujharia when there was no opposition to their project?

Why Mittal Co after the commencement of the land acquisition process, Opening of ITI, etc suddenly disappeared?

Why govt played a dubious role of a passive spectator?

Now, after a long gap, once again, how, and why, the same Mittal has appeared in Odisha Soil? The Odisha govt has unhesitatingly signed a Memorandum for a steel plant in a place like Kendrapada where there are a plethora of problems.

Now, Time has come to hurl these questions to all top political leaders who have been playing a dirty game of politics for the last 50 years in the name Steel Plant.

Bharat Patra,

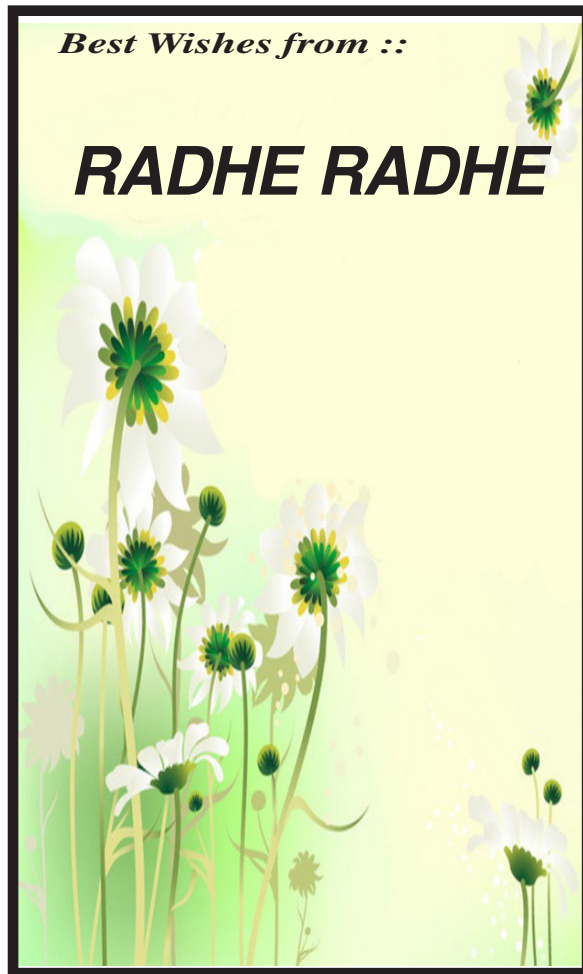
Rtd. Banker & social activist, Kendujhar

This column is open to all our esteemed readers to voice their valued opinion about the contents of the Industry and Mines Observer.

:-Editor

Best Wishes from ::

RADHE RADHE



Is The Police Rishwat Khor?



Sirish C Mohanty

The answer is yes, but it can't be so short and needs elaboration concerning context. Here it goes:

Police as a Law enforcing agency is an important institution of that social control which existed in some form or the other in all society in all ages. Police are an integral part of present-day society. A society in the present set up cannot live and progress without an effective, sincere and honest police force. The police have their roots in the ancient period and the present-day police are the outcome of an evolutionary process. The bad things which it has inherited from the old system include corruption among policemen today. Corruption exists in one form or the other in the police system. Corruption has infected every sphere of modern life. It has vitiated the moral values of society and the police force cannot be an exception. Corruption of police is not a new phenomenon, but the irony is that the issue has seldom been seized by the organization with a

sense of seriousness.

Let's have a look at the three pillars of our Democracy. The Police being a reliable part of the executive pillar and that we discuss in the latter part of the writing. The first pillar is the Legislature where the politicians belong and I have no hesitation to say that they are the most corrupted in India. Thousands of crores of ? are spent on elections by political parties and candidates during elections which they mint and recover by corrupt means. Freebies are the main source of corruption. Political corruption includes corruption in the purchase, contracts, land deals, police action, and several activities of distribution where a large sum of money is distributed from chaprasi to chief minister.

Media being the so-called fourth pillar of democracy is the second biggest corruption factory that collects money irrespective of the pillars. Including the police departments too to seal their lips against their misdeeds. It's like Vultures eat all creature's flesh, but none eats its flesh. Consequently, the print and electronic media lose their patina, and social media emerges in a race to replace them. Next comes in the index of corruption is the pillar of Judiciary which delivers unjust cases

within a short period (even courts open during the dead of the night) under the influence and personal gain and genuine cases will be wrapped for an unlimited period. No accountability is the biggest safety for the judiciary. Culprits are the traders.

Now we come to the topic. Already told police is rishwat khor. Ranking wise the Police Department is said to be at 16th Rank in the corruption index. That means 15 more departments are more corrupt than the Police department. Then why Police corruption is so unpopular? It is because Police corruption is one-way corruption. The person giving bribes to the Police does not get material benefit by doing so. It is not so in other departments. For example, let's take the PWD Dept. A Tender Notice is published inviting bids from Govt approved contractors for constructing a road say worth Rs 50 Lakh. The Contractors filing Tenders know very well that they will have to shell out some percent of the money on the staff right from office Peon to top official. The percentage is almost fixed for works. The Contractor, therefore, keeps in mind these overheads while calculating the tender price and the offer price



in accordance. If his Tender wins, he gets the work. Then he has to pay the officials at all levels the fixed percentage of amount from the cheques he would get cleared against the part of work done or completed. Thus the Contractor here gets benefited by the profit by paying the bribes to officials as their share. Both are happy.

On the contrary, the Police, say you want to get released your relative on bail in a Traffic accident case. All traffic accident cases areailable and the Police will release the accused on bail on furnishing suitable surety for the Bail. The Police officer is paid the bribe for this work. The giver does not get anything in return except his relative out of police custody. This is one-way corruption and this is the reason the Police is unpopular on the corruption chart. Comparatively the

Police corruption volume is much much lower than other departments where the volume is very high. A traffic policeman takes Rs 100 or at the highest 500 to favor you. The officer may accept few thousand in a criminal case for some favor. But we have seen even a Peon in the office of a Minister, Steel, and Mining or forest and environment is Millionaire. We have seen some Revenue officials amassed wealth running into hundreds of Crores. This is not so in the Police.

Unlike the other executive wings of the government, the police, which has maximum visibility in the society, their omissions and commissions rapidly attract public attention and spread like a wildfire through gossip and hearsay. As the police wear a mantle of defensiveness and many of their functions are shrouded in secrecy,

there is a tendency to mythicize or sensationalize such lapses like corruption. The image of police so created in the minds of people always remains poor and sullied. No doubt, public awareness of policing has risen tremendously, but issues like corruption are such hidden areas where facts, fiction, myth, perception, and reality are very intricately interwoven.

I am not in favor of corruption which is low or high in volume. I am against any corruption. But the fact I want to state is that the police could have been avoided to be overburdened with unpopular jobs that could have been done by other departments as we have seen in the pandemic days. The Police are corrupt but there are other departments also which are much much more corrupt than the Police Department.

Odisha Needs 43.6 thousand Docs, Has Only 26 thousand



Bhubaneswar : Notwithstanding the pandemic push for the registration of new doctors in Odisha, the State is witnessing an acute shortage of allopathic doctors. An estimate puts the requirement of doctors in the State at 43,609 as against the current number of 26,924 if Odisha has to meet the national average of doctor to population ratio.

While Odisha fared better than the newly carved states like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, the State fared poorer than neighboring Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. The sheer negligence of Odisha in failing to have an adequate number of doctors can well be ascertained from a comparative analysis with the north-eastern states like Assam.

Odisha Vs Assam

The doctor crunch in Odisha can well be gauged from a comparative analysis with Assam. When Assam with a population of over 3.6 crores had a total of 24,960

doctors as of December 31, 2020, Odisha with a population of over 4.7 crores had only 26,924 registered doctors.

As per experts, the active registered doctors in Assam stood at around 20,966. And in Odisha, the number stood at around 21,539. The outcome on the doctor to population ratio at the end of the year 2020: In Odisha, the ratio stood at around 1 doctor per 2,187 persons. On the contrary, the ratio in Assam stood at 1:1804.

Medical Colleges

The doctor's strength in a State depends on the intake capacity of the medical colleges therein. Despite being a smaller state, Assam has 6 medical colleges having an intake capacity of 900 students. In contrast, Odisha has only 8 medical

colleges with an admission capacity of 1,250.

Odisha has over 1.1 crore population more than Assam but has only 2 more medical colleges and an additional 350 seats.

Andhra Pradesh Vs Odisha

Significantly, when both the states are engaged in a battle in the court and the ground level over Kotia village, and when Andhra Pradesh has dispatched a team of doctors to the bordering village to provide basic health services to the inhabitants, the time is ripe to take a comparative look at the availability of doctors in the neighboring State.

With a population of over 9.17 crore, Andhra Pradesh has a total of over 1.05 lakh doctors. Taking into account the number of active doctors, the doctor

to population ratio in the State stood at 1:1091.

Medical Colleges

Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has a population that is nearly twice that of Odisha. Now sample the number of med colleges. AP has 13 such colleges with an intake strength of 2,410.

Doctor - Population National Average

The national average in the year 2020 stood at 1:1080 as against Odisha's 1:2,187.

When Will Odisha Catch Up With National Avg.?

A further glance at the data of registered doctors available with the Odisha State Medical Council (OSMC) reveals that the State had seen the maximum new doctors registered in the year 2020 (the pandemic year). The year saw a massive 4,403

doctors registered; whereas between 2017-2019, the number of new doctors registered in the State stood at a mere 840. The analysis shows to achieve the national average, Odisha needs another 22,070 doctors. At the current rate of intake, the State could accomplish the national average only in the year 2026.

Can Odisha Do So?

At the current intake rate capacity of medical colleges in the State, it seems unlikely. And the State government knows it very well. For which, in January this year, the State Health Department took a far-reaching decision to allow medical pass-outs from other states to take up medical service in the State. Only time will say whether this gamble of the State will pay off ?

Over 5.3 Lakh Police Posts Vacant In India, UP Leads List



New Delhi : There were over five lakh vacancies in police departments across states and Union territories in the country, with the maximum posts lying vacant in Uttar Pradesh, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. As per data compiled by the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), the sanctioned strength of police was 26,23,225 while the actual strength was 20,91,488 and 5,31,737 vacancies were there as on January 1, 2020, Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy informed the Lok Sabha. Reddy tabled these figures in response to a query by DMK MP T R Paarivendhar, who had sought to know details of police posts lying vacant

across the country. While presenting the data, Reddy in his written response stated that "police" is a state subject and it is primarily the responsibility of the state governments to fill up the vacancies in the police force in the states. "The Centre also issues advisories to the states for filling up these vacancies in the states and

to bring in the requisite reforms in the police administration to meet the expectations of the people," he added. Uttar Pradesh had a maximum of 1,11,865 posts lying vacant in the state police against a sanctioned strength of 4,15,315 while its actual strength was 3,03,450, according to the BPR&D data. West Bengal had 55,294 police posts lying vacant followed by Bihar (47,099), Madhya Pradesh (31,488), Telangana (29,492), Maharashtra (28,550), Gujarat (27,349), it showed. Delhi had 9,767 vacant police posts, as per the data. Nagaland was the only state in the country to have an actual strength more than the sanctioned strength. It had 28,113 police personnel against a sanctioned strength of 26,738, the data showed.

Two BJD Groups Clash During Rally In Puri

Puri : Two groups of BJD supporters reportedly clashed with each other over sloganeering during a rally in Puri on Saturday. The quarrel reportedly took place in the presence of BJD's Puri MP

group opposed such a slogan which led to the clash. Party leaders, however, refuted any dispute among the supporters. "Some were shouted slogans other than Mahatma Gandhi. I immediately stopped such



Pinaki Mishra, Minister Sameer Ranjan Dash, and senior BJD leader and former Puri MLA Maheswar Mohanty. According to reports, hundreds of party supporters gathered to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's visit to the pilgrim city. Some group of party supporters raised slogans of their party instead of Mahatma Gandhi. Another

slogans and suggested them to raise slogans on Mahatma Gandhi. There was a small verbal exchange among the supporters. I am unaware of what happened exactly," Minister Sameer Ranjan Dash said. Former Minister and senior BJD leader Maheswar Mohanty said, "No such incident has taken place. There might be some verbal duel due to the heavy crowd. I will look into the matter."

Odisha Scientist Invents Turmeric Bandage; Production by Year-end

Bhubaneswar : A turmeric-based adhesive bandage invented by a scientist in Odisha can be a game-changer in the herb's wound-healing properties. DrSanjeebSahoo, a senior scientist at Bhubaneswar-based Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), has developed a prototype of an adhesive bandage that puts curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, in a sturdy, reliable base that can be used as a band-aid.

"Turmeric has long been used in India as an anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal medicine. A pinch of turmeric dust in warm milk relieves sore throat. It used to be applied in childbirth in women and cows. But the great anti-



inflammatory powers of turmeric could not be fully utilised so far for lack of a reliable application system. Our innovation makes it possible," said DrSahoo.

Since an anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial concoction has to be applied topically, the problem with turmeric has been its insolubility in water. By using a "bit of nanotechnology,"

said DrSahoo, he has succeeded in making a curcumin emulsion with lipid and blended it in a sponge-like frame of alginate and chitosan, two biocompatible and biodegradable polymers long used gainfully in drug delivery. The frame, he explained, is somewhat like the abrasive scrubber pad Scotch-Brite.

"Many scientific laboratories across the world

have been working to increase the stability of curcumin in blood. Due to its poor kinetics, curcumin breaks down in blood fast and loses all its properties. The band-aid we have developed ensures that curcumin works more effectively and for longer periods on a wound. It even works better than curcumin ointments and gels," said Dr

The alginate-chitosan frame he has chosen raises the wound-healing efficacy of curcumin. "Chitosan also has hemostatic properties. Like it, alginate has no peripheral toxicity, and both are biocompatible and biodegradable," said DrSahoo, in his mid-40s.

This is going to be the first curcumin adhesive bandage ever, and he says it

will prove the most effective. "The way curcumin has been blended in the alginate-chitosan frame with a lipid that there will be a slow release of curcumin. If this bandage is applied on a wound, curcumin would continue to be released for four or five days. It would not require frequent replacement," he said.

Since alginate and chitosan are widely available in sea-weed and shellfish in India, the costs of producing the curcumin band-aid will be significantly lower than other products of its kind. After DrSahoo developed the adhesive bandage, ILS applied for the patent in 2010 and got it in the USA, Europe, Australia, and India

by 2017.

The technology for this bandage was transferred last year to Golap Pharmaceuticals, a Jaipur, Rajasthan-based company. According to sources, mass production is likely to begin by the end of this year after the necessary approvals are obtained from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI). Hailing from Odisha's Jajpur district, DrSahoo served as a JSPS post-doctoral fellow at Kumamoto University in Japan and Nebraska Medical Centre in the USA before joining ILS in 2005. He was among the ten Indian scientists featured among the world's 4,000 promising researchers in 2018.

Toll booths to be removed, GPS-based toll collection within 1 year: Gadkari

FASTag, which facilitates electronic payment of fee at toll plazas, was introduced in 2016



New Delhi : India will do away with toll booths and implement complete GPS-based toll collection within one year, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday. He said 93 percent of the vehicles pay toll using FASTag, but the remaining 7 percent have still not taken it despite paying a double toll. "I want to assure the House that within one year all physical toll booths in the country will be removed. It means that toll collection will happen via GPS. The money will be collected based on GPS imaging (on vehicles)," Gadkari said in the Lok Sabha during Question Hour. The minister said he has instructed

police inquiry for those vehicles which do not pay toll using FASTags. There are cases of toll theft and GST evasion cases if FASTags are not fitted in vehicles. FASTag, which facilitates electronic payment of fee at toll plazas, was introduced in 2016. From February 16, vehicles without FASTag are required to pay double toll fees at electronic toll plazas across the country. Making the tags compulsory would also help in ensuring that vehicles pass seamlessly through the toll plazas, as the fee payment would be done electronically. Gadkari said new vehicles have FASTags fitted in them, while the government has said it will give free FASTags for old vehicles.

How much money can you deposit in a savings account in a year to stay outside the taxman's radar?

In a bid to meet their banking needs, people from all walks of life - including salaried persons - are required to have at least one savings account, while many also keep multiple accounts for various reasons. People with a steady income usually open a savings bank account because that is a place where they can store their money safely while earning some interest on the balance.

However, while there is usually no limit on the amount of money to be deposited in a savings account, have you ever wondered, how much money can you put into a savings account and also withdraw from it in a financial year to stay outside the taxman's radar? Tax experts say that in a bid to curb black money and widen the tax base, the government has made it mandatory for banks,

corporates, post offices, and NBFCs, among others, to furnish the Statement of Financial Reporting (SFT), when transactions in a savings account exceed the prescribed threshold. These transactions are in respect of cash deposits/ withdrawals, investment in shares/ debentures/ time deposits/ mutual funds, credit card expenses, purchase of foreign exchange, transaction in immovable property, etc.

"The tax laws require banking companies to report cash deposits and withdrawals of Rs 10 lakh or more in bank accounts, other than current or time deposit accounts, regularly during the year to the tax department as a part of SFT. This limit is seen in aggregate for cash deposits of Rs 10 lakh or more in a financial year, in one or more accounts (other than a current account and time deposit)



of the taxpayer. This enables the tax officer to make a further inquiry on the source of funds, nature of receipt and ascertain whether appropriate taxes have been paid on the same or not," says Aarti Raote, Partner, Deloitte India. Thus, as cash deposits and withdrawals of Rs 10 lakh or more in a bank account in a financial year are required to be reported to the tax authorities, you need to be careful if you are exceeding the prescribed threshold. This limit is Rs 50 lakh and more in the case of current accounts. However, apart

from cash transactions, there are some other transactions also which you need to be aware of. Kapil Rana, Founder & Chairman, HostBooks Ltd, says, "A person should consider the nature and value of transactions that fall under-reporting requirement of rules 114E of the Income Tax Act, to stay outside the radar of tax authorities, when withdrawing or depositing any amount from a saving bank account in a financial year. Therefore, we should be aware of the reportable transactions."

Why is Gujarat voting for the BJP even after 23 years?

It is steadfastly with the BJP's agenda of development and good governance. Gujarat leads India in CongressMuktBharat. Even after considering the Skyrocketed petrol prices, SMEs' under ICU, Negative GDP, Lowest employment, Farmers' suffering, and Dissatisfied poor; Nothing has worked in the opposition's favor in the Saffron state. Ram Mandir's verdict worked in favor of the BJP.

Modi-Shah-Yogi deserves no thanks. An ideology that has been communicated, even the average person today votes for "nation



supreme". Gujaratis have blown away all fake Gandhis in BJP's storm. This victory of BJP in local elections is thumps up to the three Farm Bills. Gujus are very impressed with the Sabarmati waterfront in Ahemdabad.

This is as good as it can get within any major city in the world. It has modern and organized dhobi ghats. Such a cool thing it is. Even the world's largest stadium "Narendra Modi Stadium" is next to this river. Look how blue the river is.

So, In Gujarat, BJP has: -
100% MPs - 100% District Panchayats - 100%
MahanagarPalikas - 93%
Nagar Palikas - 86% Taluka Panchayats - 61% MLAs.

Cycling, Running, Walking, Yoga, volleyball, Cricket (outside), dhyana, football, one place for everything. Sabarmati riverfront has 2 levels. The bottom level is continuous for kilometers. From the outside drive, looks like 12-15 km one way, on one side!
 Gujus think 100 times before

even giving cents as they love profit, and it is about votes.
 This is the land of Gujarat, people vote for development here and kick the greed of free electricity and water. Modi is the reason and inspiration for this big win. His leadership has set a sound foundation

for BJP in Gujarat. Gujaratis have seen and seeing his same leadership, which has transformed Gujarat well and now transforming India. This superb win is trust in leadership and his service for the nation. It is an absolutely progressive development, national security, and one's self-respect and integrity across the globe.
 In the past, we considered villages the stronghold of the Congress, but under the leadership of Modi Ji, the BJP is winning from villages to cities, the people's trust in the BJP is growing day by day.

Why is Bengal so important for the BJP, and what is next on the BJP plan?

When the Left Alliance (of CPM) ruled West Bengal, they destroyed it. They shut down factories, reduced employment, etc. The state which was once the engine of the Indian economy became economically backward. Then Mamata Banerjee came promising employment and peace. But since then political killings and corruption have only increased not reduced. On top of that Bangladeshi infiltration and suppression of the Hindu Culture has also increased in West Bengal. West Bengal has almost everything that satisfies the political agenda of BJP:

1. Hindutva: The feeling of second-class citizens among the Hindu community has given a boost to BJP's power.
2. Pro-NRC: Some areas of West Bengal are suffering from Bangladeshi infiltration.
3. Anti-Corruption: One of the most common issues that BJP raises in

every election is Anti-Corruption and in West Bengal, there is ample proof of corruption in different departments.
 4. Culture: West Bengal is the land of people like Swami Vivekananda, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and BJP founder Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, so the state is culturally also important for BJP. These are the reasons West Bengal is experiencing the Modi wave.

As of the end of 2020, BJP and RSS are working together on a two-pronged approach:

1. First pronged approach: Let's finish the leftovers. BJP has a presence in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Bihar. However, most of you know they are not the dominant party in these states similar to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. In Maharashtra,

they had to depend on Shiv Sena to cobble together a majority. In Bihar, they had to depend on JDU to cobble together a majority. In Karnataka, they barely make it to the majority mark given their absence in the Mysore region where JDS is stronger which plays spoilsport in state elections.

So BJP is working to maximize its gains in these crucial states. BJP has a blank check to go after Maharashtra and Bihar as the road to full domination of these states is now fully clear. BJP will never work with Shiv Sena again. They will destroy Shiv Sena. With Bihar, this will be Nitish Kumar's last stint as CM. After that JDU will decline since there is no leader worth the stature like Nitish Kumar. In Karnataka, they are slowly building their base in the Mysore region. In addition to that, they are also working in Jharkhand and Assam to become the



dominant party in those states without the help of any allies.

2. Second-pronged approach: Time for Saffron has come. In their second pronged approach Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala are in their plans. You all know how serious they are concerning Bengal needs no elaboration. After Bengal, the next target will be Odisha as Naveen Patnaik is aging and people have become bored to see him as CM for such a long time. Once BJP provides an alternative in the state, BJP

will be the dominant party in Odisha. With 7 seats won in 2019 BJP doesn't count Odisha out. Telangana has a dedicated unit who are composed of BJP and RSS people who are charting the strategy to overthrow TRS. The fact that they were taking even a Municipal election so seriously clearly shows what kind of people that dedicated unit has. And as you know what happens in Telangana will also have an impact on neighboring AP. BJP will use the same template to break into AP and make their presence felt. Next will be Tamil Nadu,

some Tamils might shrug it off and laugh at it. If only they knew the dedication of RSS they wouldn't be laughing at the thought of BJP entering Tamil Nadu. One by one all dominos will fall including Kerala. You can laugh all you want but remember RSS camped and worked in Assam for over 30 years patiently. There is no other bloody political party in India that has that level of dedication and patience. Making fun of RSS and laughing at them is easy but when you see how they work behind the scenes patiently for decades will make you humbled.

JSW pays Rs 19,350 cr to creditors of Bhushan Power & Steel

Lenders would stand to realise 41% on claims of Rs 47,157.99 cr

Kolkata : JSW Steel group on Friday closed the Rs 19,350-crore transaction with lenders to acquire Bhushan Power & Steel (BPSL), bringing down the curtain on a corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) that has stretched over three-and-a-half years.

The transaction was funded through a mix of equity and debt. As part of the payment, a sum of Rs 8,614 crore in Piombino Steel (PSL) was arranged through a mix of equity, optionally convertible instruments, and debt. Of this, Rs 8,550 crore

acquisition in his firm's history. "This acquisition not only aligns with our core business and purpose but also establishes our presence and accelerates our growth vision in eastern India," he said. "I am aware how difficult it is to build a greenfield steel plant of this size and this asset is indeed a testament to your tireless efforts," he further said.

The deal concluded even as litigations are pending before the Supreme Court because the firm and the lenders wanted to close it before March 31.

The lenders, who waited

crore. SBI is expected to recover around Rs 4,000 crore.

BPSL was among the first 12 big-ticket non-performing assets (NPAs) mandated for resolution by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under the IBC. To close the transaction, most lenders voted in favor of a proposal on March 5 to accept payment according to JSW Steel's resolution plan with an undertaking to refund the amount in the event the Supreme Court delivers an adverse order.

The deal would provide for 47.69 per cent of Rs 733.76 crore claims of operational



was invested in a special purpose vehicle (SPV), Makler, the bidding company. The remaining Rs 10,800 crore was funded through debt.

JSW informed the stock exchanges that following the implementation of the resolution plan, which included payment of Rs 19,350 crore to financial creditors of BPSL and the merger of the SPV, PSL holds 100 per cent equity shares in BPSL. Seshagiri Rao, joint managing director, and chief financial officer, JSW Steel, said the company took charge of the asset on Friday.

In a letter to BPSL employees, Sajjan Jindal, chairman of JSW group, said BPSL was the largest

for a year-and-a-half after the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved the resolution plan for payment, would stand to realise 41.03 per cent on claims of Rs 47,157.99 crore.

The top creditors are State Bank of India with an exposure of Rs 9,825 crore, PNB with exposure of Rs 7,355 crore (including claims of Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India after the merger), Canara Bank (Rs 4,018 crore, including claims of Syndicate Bank), Union Bank (Rs 3,497 crore, including claims of Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank), and Asset Care & Reconstruction Enterprise with exposure of Rs 5,275

creditors. The 2.5-million tonne (MT) BPSL plant in Jharsuguda, Odisha, would put JSW Steel, which has a capacity of 18 MT, ahead of top steelmaker Tata Steel (20.6 MT), along with the 1 MT Monnet Ispat & Energy (jointly acquired with AION as majority partner). It also gives JSW a foothold in the East. Jindal in his tweet said, "Very proud that with the acquisition of Bhushan Power and Steel, we had made our entry in Odisha-East India and are now the country's leading steelmaker." Rao said JSW Steel plans to commission its 5 MT expansion at Dolvi, Maharashtra, before June 2022. That would increase its capacity to 26.5 MT.

DGP asked to deploy force to curb illegal mining

Despite enforcement activities by revenue officers and special squads, theft of minor minerals continues unabated in different parts of Odisha.

Bhubaneswar : As the growing trend of illegal mining and theft has become a challenge for minor mineral administration, the State government has directed the DGP to take immediate steps for effective enforcement activities.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra has asked DGP Abhay for the deployment of dedicated police forces at identified tehsils, sub-divisions, and district headquarters to prevent theft and illegal mining of minor minerals.

Despite enforcement activities by revenue officers and special squads, theft of minor minerals continues unabated in different parts of the State.

The direction on dedicated force deployment came after the enforcement activities were hampered following stiff resistance from the sand mafia and organised anti-socials. At times, the officers/squads also faced physical assault during raids.

Even as one section of armed police reserve (APR) force has been



deployed at each of the 10 identified tehsils and sub-divisions including Jaleswar, Dharmasala, Chilika, Tangi, Khurda, and Jatni on the request of the Revenue and Disaster Management department, the forces are not available for enforcement activities exclusively.

The DGP has been asked to instruct SPs and DCPs concerned to spare the services of the dedicated forces stationed at identified tehsils and sub-division headquarters for enforcement activities as and when required by the Revenue authorities.

"Assistance of police is essential for effective enforcement activities to curb theft and illegal mining of minor minerals," the Chief Secretary said.

Meanwhile, the Revenue department has requested the Home department for the deployment of one section of dedicated police reserve force at Nilagiri keeping in view the theft prospect in the sub-division.

Besides the locations previously identified for the deployment of police forces, four other districts - Dhenkanal, Khurda, Jajpur, and Cuttack also need dedicated force deployment to assist in enforcement activities.

The DGP has also been told to take steps for the deployment of dedicated police forces at Nilagiri, Khurda, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, and Cuttack to prevent theft and illegal lifting of minor minerals.

UAE brokering secret India-Pakistan peace roadmap : Officials

The next step in the process, an official said, involves the reinstatement of envoys in New Delhi and Islamabad

New Delhi : About 24 hours after military chiefs from India and Pakistan surprised the world last month with a rare joint commitment to respect a 2003 cease-fire agreement, the top diplomat of the United Arab Emirates popped over to New Delhi for a quick one-day visit. The official UAE readout of the Feb. 26 meeting gave few clues of what Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed spoke about with Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, noting they "discussed all regional and international issues of common interest and exchanged views on them."

Yet behind closed doors, the India-Pakistan cease-fire marked a milestone in secret talks brokered by the UAE that began months earlier, according to officials aware of the situation who asked not to be identified. The cease-fire, one said, is only the beginning of a larger roadmap to forge a lasting peace between the neighbors, both of which have nuclear weapons and spar regularly over a decades-old territory



dispute.

The next step in the process, the official said, involves both sides reinstating envoys in New Delhi and Islamabad, who were pulled in 2019 after Pakistan protested India's move to revoke seven decades of autonomy for the disputed Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir. Then comes the hard part: Talks on resuming trade and a lasting resolution on Kashmir, the subject of three wars since India and Pakistan became independent from Britain in 1947.

Over the years, India and Pakistan have routinely made peace overtures only to have them quickly fall through, particularly as both sides frequently use the issue to

stir up emotions around election time. Officials said expectations were low that the current detente would achieve much beyond the return of envoys and a resumption of trade through their Punjab land border.

But this process appears to be the most concerted effort in years, and comes as the Biden administration is seeking wider peace talks on Afghanistan - a place both countries for years have battled for influence. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to shore up growth and focus military resources on the border with China, while Pakistan's leaders are also facing economic woes and looking to make a good impression with the U.S. and other powers.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry didn't comment on the talks or the role of the UAE, while the foreign ministries of India and the UAE had no immediate comment.

Last week Pakistan army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa asked India "to bury the past and move forward" while saying the military was ready to enter talks to resolve "all our outstanding issues." The comments came a day after Prime Minister Imran Khan called for a resolution on Kashmir, which he described as "the one issue that holds us back."

On Saturday, Modi sent a tweet wishing Khan well after he was diagnosed with Covid-19 - another sign that relations between the countries are getting warmer.

The UAE, which has historic trade and diplomatic links with India and Pakistan, has taken a more assertive international role under de facto ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The biggest shift has been in the Middle East where the Gulf Arab


state has intervened in conflicts and backed groups and regional leaders. But it has also looked to Asia as it strengthens political alliances beyond its role as a global trade and logistics hub.

India-Pakistan ties were effectively cut off two years ago after a suicide attack in Kashmir killed 40 Indian soldiers, prompting Modi's government to authorize airstrikes on alleged terror facilities inside Pakistan. The joint statement last month said the two sides "agreed to address each other's core issues," signaling a wider discussion on Kashmir and terrorism.

Several clues over the past few months pointed at the UAE's role. In November, Jaishankar met bin Zayed and the crown prince on a two-day visit to Abu Dhabi, followed by Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi the following month. Roughly two weeks before the Feb. 25 announcement, the UAE foreign minister held a phone call with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan

"wherein they discussed regional and international issues of interest." And just days before, India allowed Khan's aircraft to fly over Indian airspace as he headed to Sri Lanka for a state visit - a practice suspended since the 2019 hostilities.

After the cease-fire, the UAE was one of a handful of countries to issue a statement welcoming the cease-fire announcement, highlighting the "close historical ties" it has with both India and Pakistan and hailing "the efforts made by both countries to come to this agreement." In Washington, State Department spokesman Ned Price dodged a question on what role the U.S. played in bringing the two sides together while urging Pakistan to play a constructive role in Afghanistan, Kashmir, and other places.

"Pakistan has an important role to play when it comes to Afghanistan and what takes place across its other border," Price said on Feb. 25. "So clearly, we will be paying close attention." 

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Who will...

BJP should thank the volunteers and Karyakartas in local body elections. Local elections are fought by less affluent and less famous local people. They fought hard for themselves under the BJP banner. Many lost their lives. Many murders were labeled as suicide. They had to fight TMC goons and WB police machinery. FEAR was reduced and it gave birth to more rebels. This was the greatest turning point along with the joining of some heavy-weight TMC people in BJP.

BJP president Nadda was attacked in the daylight in the presence of media and police. How? and what was the comment on this incident from Mamata - chaddanaddafaddabhadha. Why no sensitivity? Because Mamata wanted to show the BJP supporters that even your president is not safe then how can you be. They tried to impose FEAR again. But they failed.

West Bengal election will be won by BJP if silent voters come out to vote under the protection of central security forces and BJP workers.

Else TMC will win again if they can do proxy voting, threat voting, stop BJP supporters from voting, reduce silent voters to come out in number.

So, only SILENT voters will decide the fate of TMC in Bengal.

Suez Canal's jerky history and impact on global trade

The Suez Canal has existed in one form or the other since construction started under the reign of Senausret III, Pharaoh of Egypt (1887-1849 BC).

Global trade has been impacted after a container ship got stuck in the Suez Canal, the 193-km waterway that is pivotal in connecting Europe and Asia. Located in Egypt, the artificial sea-level waterway was built between 1859 and 1869 linking the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. As the shortest route between the Atlantic Ocean and lands around the Indian and western Pacific Oceans, the canal is one of the busiest waterways in the world, negating the need to navigate around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and thus cutting distances by up to 7,000 km. But the canal has had anything but smooth sailing in the 150 or more years since it was formally built. Political, financial, and technical problems have resulted in the canal shutting down five times, the last closure lasting eight years before reopening for navigation in June 1975.

The canal has existed in one form or the other since construction started under the reign of Senausret III, Pharaoh of Egypt (1887-1849 BC). Many kings who ruled later kept improving and expanding this canal. Construction picked up pace around 300 years back as maritime trade between Europe and Asia became crucial for many economies.

In 1799, Napoleon's efforts to build a proper canal were brought to an end due to an inaccuracy in the measurements. In the mid-1800s, French diplomat and engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps convinced the Egyptian viceroy Said Pasha to support the canal's construction.

In 1858, the Universal Suez Ship Canal Company was tasked to construct and operate the canal for 99 years, after which rights would be handed to the Egyptian government. Despite facing multiple problems ranging from financial difficulties and attempts by the



British and Turks to halt construction, the canal was opened for international navigation in 1869.

The French and British held most of the shares in the canal company. The British used their position to sustain their maritime and colonial interests by maintaining a defensive force along the Suez Canal Zone as part of a 1936 treaty. In 1954, facing pressure

from Egyptian nationalists, the two countries signed a seven-year treaty that led to the withdrawal of British troops.

Egypt takes over Suez Canal

In 1956, Egyptian President Abdel Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal to pay for the construction of a dam on the Nile. This led to the Suez Crisis with UK, France, and Israel mounting

an attack on Egypt. The conflict ended in 1957 after the United Nations got involved and was followed by the first instance of the UN Peacekeeping Forces being deployed anywhere in the world. Even as the occupying forces withdrew their troops, the UN forced were stationed at Sinai to maintain peace between Egypt and Israel.

In 1967, Nasser ordered the peacekeeping forces out of Sinai leading to a new conflict between the two countries. Israelis occupied Sinai and in response, Egypt closed the canal to all shipping. The closure lasted until 1975 when the two countries signed a disengagement accord. The canal was the focal point of the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, with the Arab coalition led by Egypt and Syria.

An Economic Lifeline

The canal continues to be the lifeline for all trade between the West and East as 10 per cent of the global trade

passes through it every year. The average 50 ships that pass through it daily carry about \$9.5 billion worth of goods, every day. The freight and cargo include everything from crude oil to perishables.

Impact of Suez Canal blockade

On March 23, due to weather obstructions a giant container ship, MV Ever Given, en route from China to the Netherlands ended up getting stuck in one of the canal's narrow stretches, thus blocking all traffic. Over 200 ships are stuck on both sides of the canal putting stress on global supply chains. The long-term impacts of this block will depend on how long it lasts, but some countries have already seen a rise in oil prices after the blockage.

The incident also raises questions about finding solutions to prevent future accidents and reducing the global dependence on this narrow waterway.

Prayagraj IG bans loudspeakers from 10pm-6am after Allahabad University VC complains against 'loud' azaan

Prayagraj IG has asked the DM and SSP to ensure a ban on the use of loudspeakers between 10pm and 6am in accordance with environmental laws and past court orders.



Prayagraj : Allahabad University VC had filed a complaint seeking restrictions on the use of loudspeakers early morning in mosques it disturbs her sleep. Responding to a complaint filed by Allahabad University Vice-

Chancellor Sangita Srivastava seeking restrictions on the use of loudspeakers early morning in mosques, Inspector General of Police, Prayagraj has asked the district magistrate to ensure a ban on the use of loudspeakers

between 10 pm and 6am. The ban will cover the use of all loudspeakers and public address systems at public places. In a letter to district magistrates (DMs) and senior superintendents of police (SSPs) in the four districts that fall under the Prayagraj Range, IG KP Singh said the officials must implement orders of the Supreme Court and the Allahabad High Court. The letter directs DMs and SSPs to implement a ban on the use of loudspeakers between 10pm and 6am in accordance with environmental laws and

past court orders. In her complaint, Sangita Srivastava has stated that she is "forced to wake up too early every day" due to azan being recited on a loudspeaker. Urging officials to take action, she had said the azan call on loudspeaker disturbs her sleep and she is forced to wake up too early. This, she stated, leads to headaches throughout the day and impacts her work. Sangita Srivastava had sent her complaint to District Magistrate Bhanu Chandra Goswami on March 3. A copy of the

complaint was also sent to IG Prayagraj. She said the azan or the call to prayer is played at 5.30 am through a loudspeaker installed at the mosque near her house. She said no matter how hard she tries, she cannot sleep again after the disturbance. What courts have said In January 2020, the Allahabad High Court ruled that no religion advocates the use of loudspeakers for worship. The petitioner had challenged an administrative order in the Jaunpur district of Uttar

Pradesh where the use of loudspeakers for azaan had been banned. The high court had said, "No religion prescribes that prayers are required to be performed through voice amplifiers or by beating of drums. If there is such a practice, it should not adversely affect rights of the others, including that of not being disturbed." Delivering its order, the high court cited a Supreme Court judgment from 2000 in which the court held that the freedom to practice religion was subject to public order, morality and health.

After Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone, Jacqueline Fernandez Gets On The Hollywood Action Train

Bollywood stars casting their magic on the wood screens is not a new thing now. With more and more B-town talents trying their luck in the West, the latest addition to the list is the Srilankan beauty, Jacqueline Fernandez. Following the footsteps of Priyanka Chopra and Deepika Padukone, Jacqueline is also going to be seen flexing her acting skills on a global level. Just like Priyanka and Deepika enchanted the audience by nailing the action genre in



Quantico and XXX: Xander Cage respectively. Jacqueline is also all set to be a part of a big-budget Hollywood film where she will be flaunting her fitness and action moves. The Kick star has already signed for the expensive project which is going to be an out-and-out action flick. The film will be completely different from Jacky's Hollywood debut Women Stories, which was an anthology of six stories.

As per reports, Jacqueline Fernandez will

be seen performing some high voltage action sequences and she has already started undergoing training for the same. However, there hasn't been any official announcement on the same and the star might share the good news in the summers.

Meanwhile, the upcoming year will be a packed year for Jacky as she will be seen in back-to-back big flicks like Bachchan Pandey, Cirkus, and Radhe.

Kanika Kapoor Recalls Her 'Tough Time' After Testing Covid Positive Last Year



New Delhi: Singer Kanika Kapoor has opened up about her experience of being ridiculed in the media and trolled online, after she became one of the first Indian celebrities who tested positive for Covid-19. "It was a tough time. It was more shocking than anything else, to see people just say anything without knowing the reality of the situation," Kanika tells IANS.

Last year, after the 42-year-old had announced testing positive for coronavirus for the first time, it was reported that the singer-songwriter had attended high-profile parties, instead of going into isolation after arriving from London. She had faced flak for not revealing her travel history and the

Uttar Pradesh government had filed a case against her. "It was really sad to see that people wanted to be so mean, despite knowing someone is so unwell. I (really) think it was quite bad and mean," she says. "I hope people learn from it and understand what they say and what they mean. I really hope that after this pandemic, they would all get a better perspective and be more helpful," she adds. The pandemic, Kanika says, has heavily impacted artistes, and feels it forced them to start talking about ownership of their music.

"It was very tough because there was no daily income, and that's what an artiste depends on. It made us think about the fact that all of the rights of our music are with a music company. I think it is high time that musicians start owning some of their publishing," says Kanika.

"It is a sad situation — not just singers, even lyricists, composers and the musical players of the song; If there's a situation like this, like the pandemic, where they don't have their wages because of no live shows, there's nothing to do. They have nothing to fall back on in situations like this, and that is sad," adds Kanika, who recently released her single, "2 seater car" in collaboration with Indian-American musician Happy Singh.

Rhea Chakraborty Breaks Silence Talks About The Power Of Love

The year 2020 nothing less than a rollercoaster ride for Rhea Chakraborty post the demise of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. However, it seems like she is getting back to her normal life now. The actor who has not been much active on social media after being named in the SSR case recently broke her virtual silence by posting a picture that spoke about the power of love.

In the latest picture, the actor was seen posing with Saand Ki Aankh producer Nidhi Parmar Hiranandani in the picture. Along with the picture she wrote, "#LOVEISPOWER 'Love is a fabric which never fades, no matter how often it is washed in the water of adversity and grief' - Rober Fulghum" She had earlier made a comeback on social media on the occasion of International Women's Day on Monday, months after she was released from jail. Rhea posted a picture on Instagram, where she is seen holding her mother's hand. Her last update on the photo-sharing website was on August 27, 2020, shortly after which she went off social media following the controversy



that has hounded her after the death of her boyfriend, actor Sushant Singh Rajput. On the work front, Director Rumi Jaffery had revealed that he had roped in Rhea to play the female lead in his upcoming next Chehre. The film also stars Amitabh Bachchan and Emraan Hashmi and is ready to release. The makers are aiming for a theatrical release of the movie in 2021.

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