

Anniversary Greetings

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to the readers, advertisers, and contributors of the Industry and Mines Observer on the occasion of the newspaper's 15th anniversary.

This special milestone offers us a chance to reflect upon their numerous achievements and to look to their future with confidence. The Industry and Mines Observer has become a popular source of information on issues and events of interest in and around the community. The status couldn't have been possible without your benevolent support that is as real as today.

I would like to commend everyone involved in the production of the newspaper for their commitment and time.

Please accept my best wishes for continued success in the years to come!

Sirish C Mohanty, Editor

Odisha Supplies Oxygen To Delhi, CM Kejriwal Extends Gratitude

Bhubaneswar : Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday extended his gratitude towards Odisha for supplying oxygen during the ongoing fight against COVID-19.

"Out of the total increased quota of oxygen for Delhi, we have received maximum from Odisha. The freshly allotted quota may take some more days to reach Delhi. We are trying our best to airlift the same from Odisha to save time at this critical time,"



Kejriwal said.

Through a tweet, Kejriwal also thanked Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who assured him of all support in facilitating the lifting of

the oxygen quota from Odisha. Patnaik has engaged a special officer on the job, Kejriwal tweeted.

He said the enhanced quota of oxygen has

started arriving at Delhi as major city hospitals are running with an acute shortage of oxygen.

Kejriwal also thanked the Centre and Delhi High Court for their efforts to raise the quota of oxygen for the Capital city to fight Covid-19.

"Delhi had a daily quota of 378 MT of medical oxygen that has been increased to 480 MT by the Centre. I expressed my sincere gratitude to the Central government and Delhi Court for (Page-13)

Free food to 800 million in May, June under PM GaribKalyan Anna Yojana

Prime Minister Modi stressed that it is important that the poor of the country have nutritional support when the country is facing the second wave of coronavirus pandemic.



New Delhi : The Centre said on Friday the government will provide 5 kilogram of free food grains to millions of poor covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013, "due to economic disruptions caused by the Covid-19 outbreak in the country" for May and June

under the Pradhan Mantri GaribKalyan Anna Yojana.

This will be "over and above NFSA foodgrains for next two months i.e. May and June 2021 on the same pattern as the earlier "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)", it added. "Under

this special scheme (PMGKAY), around 80 Crore NFSA beneficiaries covered under both categories of NFSA, namely Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Householders (PHH), will be provided with an additional quota of free-of-cost foodgrains (Rice/Wheat) at a scale of 5 Kg per person per month, over and above their regular monthly entitlements under NFSA. Government of India will bear all expenditure of over ₹26,000 Crore on account of food subsidy and Central assistance to states/UTs on account (Page-13)

Never Asked For Bed Facility At 5-Star Hotel For Judges: Delhi HC

The Delhi government said there was no malice behind the move. It was the media that had created the perception, it said.

New Delhi : The Delhi High Court said today it had never asked for Covid facilities at a five-star hotel and ordered the city government to "immediately withdraw" its decision to assign 100 rooms at the hotel, Ashoka, exclusively for judges and their families.

"When did we ask for a 100-bed facility at a five-star hotel? We had only said if a judicial officer or a judge or their family is infected, they should get hospital admission. Our concern is concerning judicial officers in the lower judiciary who have to hold court. We have already lost two judicial officers," the High Court,



furiously, told the Delhi Government.

"Why did you cause this sort of controversy? The perception is that we asked Delhi Government for a special facility. Or that you did it to appease us. You did everything on paper," said the judges, apparently upset at questions raised over luxury Covid facilities set aside for them at a time people are struggling for hospital beds.

The Delhi government said there was no malice behind the move. It was the media that had created the perception, it said, explaining that many hotels in the city had been turned into (Page-13)

Villagers Oppose Land Acquisition for Lanjiberna Mines



RAJGANGPUR : (Satish Sharma) District Administration's attempt to hold a public hearing about land acquisition in Kukuda (Rajgangpur block) and Katang gram panchayat (Kutra block) for Dalmia Group's cement producing company OCL India Ltd on 16th April failed to yield any result. District Collector had notified for the conduct of such public hearing for the acquisition of 27.51 acres

of land in Katang grampanchayat and 236.8 acres of land in Kukuda grampanchayat in respect of Lanjiberna mines of OCL India Limited.

The public hearing on the matter had to be stopped as tribal protestors opposing vehemently any such move stalled that public hearing. Hundreds of villagers of both Panchayats gathered at the meeting site and raised slogans against the

proposal of land acquisition. The administration tried to calm down the enraged gathering but villagers did not allow them to hold the meeting.

Realizing stiff opposition by the villagers and the severity of the situation administration had stopped public hearing.

While relenting administration appealed to people to register their

objections in writing. Earlier local Sarpanch had appealed to District Collector not to hold any public hearing meeting amidst the current alarming pandemic situation. But the administration did not heed this request and decided to go ahead with the public hearing.

Before this public hearing administration had carried a study on the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of land acquisition.

The study report was prepared by Nabakrushna Choudhury Center for Development Studies (NCDS). The report was handed over to both the Sarpanchs of Kukuda and Katang grampanchayat for awareness of families to be affected by land acquisition.

Authorities claim that the public hearing was called only to discuss and invite suggestions from the affected families. Therefore the study team members of NCDS were also present to clear the doubts of the affected families. They invited views and suggestions, if any, of the land acquisition affected people. But they refused to give an ear to it.

Local villagers told 'IMO' correspondents that they did not trust authorities anymore. They make false promises, present rosy pictures to villagers before land acquisition. Appallingly, they forget their promises. They have not done promised development work for displaced persons. They don't give employment to local people despite being qualified for the job. So how could they trust them now?

Abhimanyu Behera, Sub-Collector, Sundaragrh along with other officers, representatives of OCL, and a large contingent of the police force were present at the venue.

Now it would be interesting to see how things would be unfolded in the future?

Sabjicooler save farmer's from dumping their unsold vegetables in Bolangir

Bolangir: (Sudhir Mishra) It is a common sight in rural areas to find farmers resorting to the distress sale of their vegetables at a throwaway price, to a middleman, unscrupulous traders, and even throwing of unsold vegetables due to lack of storage facility at home. Vegetables are perishable commodities and which need to be stored in cold storage to keep in good condition which is lacking in the Bolangir district. A cold storage construction requires huge investment, points out a local here.

But now Mother Nature has an answer to the farmer's woes and the natural Sabji cooler, which don't require electricity, can store vegetables for five to six days in its chamber and keep its fresh, is providing benefits to the farmers of Muribahal in Bolangir.

What is a Sabji Cooler?

It's a brick-and-mortar storage facility with a covering on top. It works on the principle of evaporative cooling and does not require any electricity except watering once a day. The cooling chamber temperature is lower than the ambient temperature by a margin of 5-15°C (depending on ambient relative humidity) and maintains a high relative humidity of above 85-90% inside the cooling chamber. The low temperature and high humidity inside the chamber preserve the vegetables for five to eight days. The storage capacity of one unit is 1 quintal, explain a civil society member.

Technical Support

The RuKart Technology and PRADAN provided all kinds of Technical as well as Technological support. The RuKart Technology also provided awareness &

capacity building support and trained Producer's group members on the appropriate use of cooling unit explain a civil society member.

There are 105 women farmers involved in the Subhadra Producer group (PG), of which 90 members are actively involved in vegetable production. These members, in last year, selected Onion, Tomato, Chilli, Brinjal, Bitter gourd and Arhar, Ground Nut (Pulses) as winter crops and cultivated in 84.2 acres. PG members sold a total of 424.6 quintals of the above-mentioned products through collective as well as outlet marketing.

Due to lockdown, many times they could not sell their products at the right time nor could they store in any storage facility. Consequently, farmers with no storage facilities were compelled to sell their crops at throwaway prices.



Therefore, as per the demand and need of the Producer group members, one cooling unit was installed in the village. Till now, 9 Producer group members have been accessing the facility regularly since the day of installation, says Bhajaram Sahu of Janamukti Anusthan.

Earlier they used to collect vegetables only once a week, the day before the weekly market, and on an average 20% of vegetables got wasted due to lack of storage facility,

especially during summer.

After installation of Subjee Cooler, they don't wait for the market day rather collect their products at the right time i.e. twice a week, and store them in the cooling unit for 3-4 days. On the market day, they sell their fresh vegetables and get good prices. Again, the unsold produce is stored in Subjee Cooler and sold on next day either to middle-man or consumer directly points out Bhajaram Sahu of Jana Mukti Anusthan Bongomunda.

"Now, the markets are closed for Saturday & Sunday due to weekend lockdown, yet we can collect our vegetables on time, store in Sabjee Cooler and sell on Monday. It would help us to reduce loss from farm to market during the lockdown period and consequently increase our income. Because of the freshness of our vegetables, we can sell at 20-30% higher price than others, says another group member.

District Collector of Bolangir Sri Chanchal Rana, inaugurated one cooling unit of Maa Sarala PG of Bramhni village in Muribahal block two months ago on 25th February 2021. "The sabji cooler is an eco-friendly, non-electricity-based cooling system which retains the freshness of vegetables and fruits by a few days so that they remain marketable" says District Collector Chanchal Rana.

Bengal polls key to economic policy: can junk Manmohanomics selling spree



Prof. Shivaji Sarkar

Former HOD in English journalism in IIMC, Delhi

The Bengal elections may be a referendum for the economic policies. It will decide whether the politics of the "reformist economy" will continue or force India to search for a new model.

The stakes are high for BJP as it is keen on perpetuating high prices to the fee-toll regime and so is its eagerness to win the state. The regional Trinamool-Left forces have put up tough resistance to save their bastion. If the BJP wins, it will be an endorsement of its policies for the sale of PSUs or the privatization spree. If the TMC wins on its own or forms government with the Left-led alliance, nationally the 1991 Manmohanomics, which ushered in the privatization of national assets and severe woes on the people, would come

for review.

TMC leader Mamata Banerjee leading a fierce battle against the aggressive BJP released her manifesto promising higher financial aid to farmers, job creation, better health and education, housing to all, and inclusion of more communities in the OBC category. Yes, caste has made a visible return to Bengal politics from the supposed myth of Bengal having risen above caste politics long back.

The BJP's Hindutva equally has emerged strong and may polarize voting, not everywhere, but in pockets. It is trying to woo the economically poor Matua community who migrated from erstwhile East Pakistan or East Bengal, now Bangladesh. Matuas are a sect of scheduled caste

groups. Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Dhaka would visit their sacred place that is expected to help the party in Bengal.

The dynamics are more. The TMC leader is trying hard to woo the Bengali sentiments, against the pan-nationalistic cry of the BJP. The Bengali narrative since Independence has dogged the state and even led first state chief minister Dr BC Ray alleges discrimination by Delhi and the consequent flight of capital from the state. Mamata has acted carefully igniting the sentiments to capture the most media footage even during the visits of the prime minister or other BJP leaders since January 23, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose birth anniversary bash at Victory Memorial. In no recent election, not even in Bihar, the state parties were seen to be the cynosure of the media as it is being seen in Bengal. A large number of YouTube channels, certainly getting funds from different quarters, are showing events and issues that the national media miss. These not only capture popular moods but also stark economic issues like the farmers' agitation, their campaign in the state, inflation-hit people, and midnight discussions on privatization.

The two-day strike by bank employees and subsequent strike of insurance workers also are flashed on social media.

Bengal is discussing demonetization, its impact on the poor and economy, GST, pushing through three laws liberalizing farm markets and junking of the land bill following problems in Rajya Sabha and also lockdown, social and economic devastation. The sale of PSUs is being discussed in terms of job losses and how would the government be able to create jobs. An interesting discussion is on Mamata's high-handed style of functioning and centralization of power in the BJP. In short, autocratic behavior is in question.

Bengal is not much enthused with One Nation, One India of BJP, whether it is in terms of market or cultural nationalism. Interestingly enough the central government's setting up of a development finance institution with Rs 20,000 crore government funding is not enthusing voters. Infrastructure projects, a perception has developed, use more machines than employing men.


Inflation is hitting people hard. The consumer prices have risen by 5 percent in February. They are worried about the administered rise of petrol and diesel prices, doubling of edible mustard oil prices to Rs 150, fish, other food items, and galloping rise of non-food item prices. This seethes the voter and this ire is not turned towards Mamata.

To say that this is uniformly hitting the BJP in constituencies is also not true. It has a strong fighting machine and has captured a significant space. The Left-Congress-ISF alliance is vying with BJP to have the second slot if not the first. The BJP has emerged as the challenger and carefully sweeps stark economic questions under the carpet with national security issues or the safety of the Hindu community facing an onslaught of the highly aggressive minority population.

The Muslim politics has entered a new phase with the rise of ISF of Futura peer Abbas Siddique "to highlight their economic plight". It is breaking the mold of Muslim politics comprising about 27 percent of the population but going high as 80 percent in some constituencies. Even the BJP has fielded Muslim candidates. Never before except in J&K, anywhere a Muslim religious identity has been at the forefront. This may change the political pattern in many states and may make BJP more relevant or not but its polarized politics may have caused the rise of a Frankenstein against inclusive Gandhian politics. Will there be a churning also in the Congress, which has an alliance with AIUDF of Badruddin Ahmed in Assam, and other parties? This changing pattern

may also influence the national economy. If the trend strengthens the political parties would have to be watchful so as not to divide resources on religious community grounds that may lead to new social strife.

Yes, politics is coercive in Bengal. The Left, TMC, BJP, and others have mastered the art. It can influence the voting pattern. But whatever the economy is central to Bengal elections. Even a polarized person would vote for or against the economic policies. No one till now has the answer to corruption and bureaucratic empowerment that was started by the Left and has not left untouched any political party. The victory of Modi or Mamata would decide the direction. The BJP has a lot at stake not only for the party but for its rich friends as well and even the much-touted National Education Policy that aims at privatizing the sector.

Mamata, if she wins, may emerge as the future face of the non-BJP alliance, which even may include the Left and Congress. There may begin many changes not only in economic policies, administered prices of petrol but also move for having constitutional restraint on money powers of the government. A lot may change or not, Bengal holds the key. 

Super Specialty Hospital to be used as Covid Care hospital

New Delhi, April 23: The newly built Super Specialty Hospital at Rourkela has been approved to be used as Covid Care Hospital. Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Steel and PNG, has nodded to use SAIL Super Specialty Hospital at Rourkela as a COVID-19 care hospital in wake of rising cases in the region.

Inspired by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and guided by Dharmendra Pradhan, Steel Authority of India Limited



has taken this decision.

The district authority had also sent a request for utilising the ICU facilities of the Super Specialty Hospital for treatment of Covid-19 patients. The 60

bedded ICU facility of SAIL-RSP will be used for COVID-19 care.

In the meanwhile Steel Minister has instructed the SAIL management to enhance the ventilator

number to at least 100, to extend treatment to more number of critically ill COVID-19 patients. The Process has already been initiated in war footing to procure and install new

ventilators.

A COVID-19 testing facility was also set up at the SAIL-Rourkela Steel Plant's Ispat General Hospital which has been functioning since then and contributing to Odisha's fight against the pandemic.

It is worth mentioning here that keeping in view the growing health care needs of the people and the lack of super-specialty facilities in this region, a 200-bed super-specialty hospital has been set up at IGH with the initiative of

the Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India.

President Ram Nath Kovind dedicated the Ispat Post Graduate Institute and Super Specialty Hospital of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) to the Nation in a grand function organized at the Hospital on 21st March 2021.

The Hospital has Super-Specialty facilities for Neurology, Neuro-Surgery, Cardiology, Cardiothoracic & vascular surgery, and Nephrology.

NITR conducted 'Hunkaar' 21

Pantomime, the Official Dramatics Club under the Literary and Cultural Society at Student Activity Centre, NIT Rourkela successfully conducted 'Hunkaar' 21. A large number of participants from all over India and even from overseas participated in the event.

"The theme of the fest was 'Breaking the Social Stigma'. The main aim of Fest was to connect with the students of Theater

background by conducting a variety of events like various competitions, webinars, performances by eminent personalities and a lot more." informed Pankaj Agrawal of Pantomime Club.

Competitions like Radio Play, Short Film, Alternate Ending, Poster Design, and CineBuzz Quiz were conducted. These events saw huge participation from students and led to a culmination of

talents and sharing of creative ideas. The foremost aim was to educate and create awareness and to Breaking Social Stigmas like Mental Health, Patriarchy, Body Shaming, Racism, etc. by using Art and Cultural Events.

A webinar with Mr. Aditya Kripalani (FTII Alumnus and National Award Winner) Prominent Filmmaker was also organized as part of this

event. He shared many interactive ways of film-making with the audience and guided them on how one can go ahead in this field. A KaviSammelan on the last day of the Fest was also organized.

All the online events were conducted successfully with the support of Advisor Prof. Srinivasan Muthuswamy and Event Coordinators Ankush Lohani and Sayambika Das.

Intensive Sanitisation by Dalmia Cement at Rajgangpur

Rajgangpur : Realizing the spread of deadly covid 19 at an alarming rate Dalmia Cement (India) carried out a disinfection drive in different parts of Rajgangpur town for preventing the spread of the COVID -19 pandemic. On 21st April, the Public Health Unit of Town Engineering carried out the disinfectant drive at

Durgamandir, Madhusudan Colony, Kumbharpada, Talkipada, Indian Gas

office road, Post office, and other places.

The Rajgangpur Municipality and other prominent citizens of the town had requested the company officials to carry out a sanitization drive in different parts of the town.

Last year also Cement plant under its social responsibility for local areas regularly sanitized various parts of Rajgangpur town.

Somedays days company had carried out disinfection of



government offices, court, tehsil offices, advocates offices, police station, municipality, and Panchayat Samiti offices. Company management assures that they would continue

this sanitization drive as per the need.

Apart from sanitizing different parts of the town company has disinfected all offices of the plant, various places inside the plant, and residential areas.

RSP supplies Liquid Medical Oxygen to hospitals to combat the COVID-19 pandemic

In another effort to strengthen the battle of the country against the COVID-19 pandemic, SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) on instructions of Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, has started supplying Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to different hospitals of Odisha as well as other States.

It is worth mentioning here that the three Air Separation Units (ASU) of Oxygen Plant of SAIL, RSP produce Oxygen in gaseous form for use in the process of making hot metal and steel. The Units also supply oxygen for use in the Ispat General Hospital of RSP. Besides, two



more ASUs are being operated on Build, Own, Operate (BOO) basis by M/s Linde India Ltd. to meet RSP's Oxygen demand. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when many hospitals of Odisha and other States were in dire need of Oxygen to save the lives of critically ill patients, RSP came forward to supply Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) from its Units. Since April 2020, the Oxygen Plants of RSP along with M/s Linde has supplied more than 7740 tonnes of LMO to Odisha, as well as other states to meet the requirement of this vital life-saving item. The Steel Plant has in the meanwhile stepped up its liquid oxygen generation to serve the country during the crisis. While the gaseous oxygen is being used for the sustenance of the plant processes, the entire production of liquid oxygen is being provided for medical use. Despite tanker availability being the bottleneck, 572 Tonnes of LMO have been supplied so far to Odisha and other States in the month of April-2021.

'Mo School' Abhiyan contributors felicitated



Jagatsinghpur: To give a boost to Mo School Abhiyan contributors, the district education department, was organized a felicitation ceremony in AdiKabi Sarala Das Sanskruti Bhawan here, the teachers, donors, and alumina who have made a significant contribution to

the scheme in Jagatsinghpur district were felicitated.

The District education officer Niranjana Behera chaired the event, collector S K Mohapatra attended as chief guest accompanying other district officials as DRDA project director Saroj

Kumar Mohanty, DPC Sapan Kumar Jena, DIPRO Kaminiranjan Patnaik, and a few headmasters and teachers. Speaking at the occasion collector Mohapatra said Mo School Abhiyan an incentive scheme of state government aims how to improve the quality of education,

development of schools, and generate funds for the Mo School funds.

The scheme has been successfully launching in Jagatsinghpur district, many educationists, old students, people have come forth donating funds for Mo School Abhiyan, as per scheme guidelines the donors and contributors will be felicitated at least once a year, following the procedures of district education department organized the felicitation ceremony, Collector said.

Later appreciation letters sourced from Chief Minister's office were distributed among the Mo school Abhiyan contributors.

Two held peddling brown sugar in J'spur

Jagatsinghpur: The district excise sleuths acting on a tipoff on Monday have arrested two youths allegedly peddling brown sugar in Gopalsagar village here and recovered about 31 grams of drugs under their possession including a bike. According to the excise inspector, Pratap Dash informed that both drug peddlers were identified as Bhakta Charan Nayak and Santanu Bhoi hailing from the Niali area under Puri district and habitual drug hawkers in their locality. As a reliable source informed the excise department two days ago that Gopalsagar area here has become a swift hub for drug business, many drug traders from neighboring districts have been coming to Gopalsagar regularly and collecting drug substances. Responding to the information Excise sleuths conducted the raid and picked up both drug hawkers, informed Excise inspector Dash.

Foundation stone laid for Kania- Machhagaon road

Jagatsinghpur: The state steel, mines, and works minister Prafulla Samal laid the foundation stone and expansion of Kania- Machhagaon state highway 42 through virtual mode. The 5.7 km road estimates to cost Rs 9 crore, Jagatsinghpur R&B division has undertaken the work expecting to complete before July this year, the minister revealed. The State I&PR and water resource minister Raghunandan Das attending the event at collector office video conference room expressed gratitude to chief minister Naveen Patnaik for granting funds for the project and added the development of this road would be benefited 9 Panchayat's coming under Balikuda and Naugaon blocks. Among others, MP Dr Rajashree Mallick, Collector S K Mohapatra, Balikuda block Chairperson Madhusmita Sahoo, executive engineer R&B Nimain Das were present and spoke on virtual mode.

Scribe's elder brother passes away

Jagatsinghpur: Jachindra Nath Parida [58] working as headmaster at Choudwar high school passed away following a cardiac arrest on Tuesday in a private hospital in Cuttack. Late Jachindra was the elder brother of Jyoti Ranjan Parida senior journalist and district union of journalist secretary hailing from Sidhal village six km away from here. According to family sources informed that Jachindra was cremated at Satichowra in Cuttack in presence of family members, late Parida was survived by two sons and wife.

Collector chaired the meeting on Covid 19 situation with religious leaders

Jagatsinghpur: The Jagatsinghpur Collector cum district magistrate S K Mohapatra on Tuesday chaired a meeting with members from the different religious community and discussed with them implementing Covid 19 appropriate behaviors and protocols in temples and religious places across the district amid pandemic.

Speaking at the meeting Collector appealed to religious leaders for restricting the entry of visitors and devotees to temples,



mosque, and church who are without a face mask and violating Covid 19 guidelines, moreover Collector Mohapatra suggested strict compliance of the SoP and the ceiling on the number of people permitted to attend

Baba Sahib Ambedkar's birth anniversary is celebrated

Jagatsinghpur: The 130th birth anniversary of late Baba Sahib Ambedkar was celebrated in district headquarters here. State I & PR and water resources minister Raghunandan Das attended the event as chief guest accompanying collector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra, superintendent of police Prakash R, Tirtol MLA Bijaya Shankar Das, state Cashew development corporation chairman Amarendra Das, Jagatsinghpur block chairperson Bijaya Laxmi Behera, Tahasildar Manas Ranjan Bhoi, sub-collector Dharmendra Mallick and DIPRO Kaminiranjan Patnaik and members from district SC/ST welfare employees and officers association. Minister Das was paid flora tribute at the Ambedkar statue locates outside the collector office here. Speaking on the occasion minister Das lauded the late Ambedkar's contribution articulating the constitution of India and he was a champion of the Dalit community.

Former CM Janaki Ballahv Patnaik remembered

Jagatsinghpur: The former Odisha chief minister, Ex-governor, veteran literate, and Congress leader Janaki Ballahv Patnaik was remembered on his death anniversary in a function held in district headquarters here. Late Patnaik's remembrance committee secretary Nikunja Kishor Behera chaired the meeting accompanying several congress leaders, social activists, civilians, and educationists, described late Janaki Babu as the founder of modern Odisha, he had served as chief minister of Odisha three times, he had emphasized industrialization and implementation of poverty alleviation programs in Odisha undertaking by both union and state governments during his tenure. Among others, Congress leaders R N Mohanty, ex municipality chairman Biplab Choudhury, Prasanna Samantray, and few associates of late Patnaik spoke. Earlier floral tributes were paid at the late Janaki Babu Statue locates at headquarters.

gatherings and celebrations in religious places set by the state government for lowering the risk of spread of Coronavirus.

The meeting was attended by members from management committees of Maa

Sarala Temple, Gorekhnath Pitha, Grameswar temple, Jagannath temple from Dhyanakuda, and Gadakujanga, different leaders from Mosques, secretary United church Paradip and senior administration officials.

Villagers of Ashokakutee guard protest poachers and protect Similipal



Baripada : The forest officials of Mayurbhanj district have deposited faith with villagers of Ashokakutee of Labanyadeipur GP of Mayurbhanj district after some villagers had handed over 13 country made guns before the forest

department as part of their effort to protect wildlife and Similipal forest. The villagers prevented more than 15 armed tribal people who were trying to sneak Similipal National Park for AkhandaShikar as their ritualistic event holds before Pana Sankranti

every year. The villagers are guarding forests for the last 5 years and prevent animal poaching.

On Tuesday, villagers protested more than 15 people of their locality when the armed people were on their way towards Similipal National Park

with a country-made gun for AkhandaShikar. The armed people had left the gun to see the villages as the villagers have been guarding forests of Similipal National park. The villagers brought the guns and handed over them to forest personnel in presence of Kaptipada Ranger Officer Maheswar Singh on the same day.

Maheswar Singh the Range Officer said some of the villagers of Ashokakutee have been guarding forests nearby village but a few numbers of villagers had been opposed to them. To see the villagers, the armed people had left their guns and ran away. The

villagers then handed over 13 guns to the forest department. To see their attachment with the forest and prevention of animal poaching, the forest department later provided them a paddy harvesting machine, paddy threshing machine, and a masala grinder machine for the welfare of the village. In presence of forest officials and Sarpanch of Labanyadeipur Sini Sri Dei, a village development committee had formed. The committee has to care for the machines. They will give to the machines for hire purposes. A bank account was opened in the name of the

development committee. The hire money will deposit in the account and later it will use for the development of the committee and village welfare. Turam Singh was the president and HarisingDeogam was the secretary of the committee. The village has 145 households over the population of around 1000. Maheswar Singh the range officer said that such an initiative had been taken by the forest department to avert the mind of people from animal poaching, three to four awareness meetings were conducted by the forest department in the village.

Integrated Solar System introduced in Similipal

Baripada : Even after wildfire damaging core of natural resources and hectares of shrubbery in Similipal National Park, the authority of the park here have to introduce Integrated Solar Irrigation System for the preservation of meadow, douse fire and preservation of water for the animal, prevention of poaching and preservation of water for animals are living inside the Park. A Portable Integrated Solar system was developed by a team of National Park under Divisional Level Innovators' Challenge-2021 on Tuesday in the core area of STR South on a trial basis. Later there a good number of big projects will be set up in core areas of the National Park use for developmental



activities. Deputy Director of Similipal Tiger Reserve and DFO of STR South JagyandattaPati said that initially a Portable Integrated Solar Irrigation System had been developed by Team National Park as a trial basis. This system can be used for meadow irrigation, Anti Poaching Camp (APC) water provisioning, and infra construction with zero running cost. With bigger wheels and a water storage facility, a similar system may be used for watering of avenue plantation and forest fire management. The DD said that a one HP submersible motor, three solar panels that can run the motor, and some meters of pipe were arranged. Later, the motor was sinking into a nearby canal for lifting water. The small project came up successfully, he said. "We are planning to set up the Integrated Solar Irrigation System in core areas of National Park. Once it will set up it has come for many developmental activities besides meadow management too," said the DD.

Chaksuliapada check post at Odisha-West Bengal seals because of Covid-19



Baripada : Mayurbhanj district police intensify vigil at inter-state routes of Odisha-West Bengal after a Triple Mutant variant of Covid-19 had reportedly dictated in the neighboring State. The district police took such a step after Chief Secretary of Odisha Suresh Chandra Mohapatra directed to intensify the vigil at inter-state routes in both Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts as more than 90 routes were connecting the neighboring West Bengal and the Jharkhand States.

The district administration deploys sufficient security personnel at the check posts at Hatibari and Jamsola check posts in Jharpokharia police station along with other inter-state

routes and stopped inter-state bus services. The fresh Covid-19 norms by the State Government directed stress on surveillance over the movement of West Bengal returnees after the Triple Mutant variant of the virus reportedly surfaced in the neighboring state.

Mayurbhanj SP Parmar Smit Parshottamdas said that as many as 32 entry points including three major check posts at Hatibari and Jamsola under Jharpokharia police station and Chaksuliapada under Suliapada police station under the surveillance of the police. Sufficient police personnel is deployed at the points to check the movement of people who entered the district from

West Bengal through the border routes after they were shown the RTPCR negative test report. Others who have no RTPCR negative reported are sent to the nearest quarantine centers. Among the Covid-19 norms, the district police are emphasizing one RTPCT negative report and home quarantine for the persons who are coming from West Bengal, the SP said.

Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj said that as many as 44 quarantine centers are already activated and more quarantine centers will reactivate that is depending on the returnee's strength. Around two to three clusters (TMC) have

reactivated in both rural and urban areas in the district. A capacity of the 100-bed facility of Covid Hospital reopens in KIMS premises at Bankisole under Suliapada block from Monday, the Collector said. "We are planning to increase bed numbers to 700 in Covid Care Centres in Baripada, Udala, Karanjia, and Rairangpur four sub-divisions with sufficient Oxygen support," the Collector said.

The district had reported 122 positive cases from the last 24 hours. The total cases reported 15,735 from the district. When 14,826 recovered, 816 were active and 93 succumbed to the infection.

"India Was There For Us": Joe Biden

US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke on Monday as the US administration swung into action to assist India in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Washington : India was there for the American people in their hour of need and the United States will be there for the country as it meets its worst-ever public health crisis, US President Joe Biden said after his phone call with PM Modi.

The two leaders spoke on Monday as the Biden administration swung into action to assist India in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The urgent help announced by the White House ranged from oxygen supplies, raw materials for COVID-19 vaccines, critical life-saving drugs to PPEs. "India was there for us, and we will be there for them," Joe Biden said in a tweet soon after his phone call with PM Modi. This was the second telephonic conversation between the two leaders after Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United

States on January 20.

"Today, I spoke with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and pledged America's full support to provide emergency assistance and resources in the fight against COVID-19," Joe Biden said. The call between the two leaders is believed to have lasted for about 45 minutes. During the call, Biden is understood to have offered all help that India needs in this hour of crisis.

"The president pledged America's steadfast ongoing support for the people of India, who have been impacted by the recent surge in the COVID-19 cases," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at the daily news conference.

At India's request, the United States is exploring options to provide oxygen and related supplies. The Department of Defense and



USAID are pursuing options to provide oxygen generation systems.

"We may be in a position to reroute shipments plan further countries with lower immediate needs given the urgency of the conditions in India, and we'll have more details, hopefully, on the possibility soon," she said.

The Department of Defense, she said, is also exploring providing field oxygen generation systems, which the United States has used in its field medical hospitals. Each unit can provide oxygen

for up to 50 to 100 beds. The administration is also exploring options to provide oxygen concentrators and ventilators and is in technical discussions with India to ensure the equipment that the US supplies can connect to Indian devices, the official added. "The United States has already provided 200 ventilators to India last year and trained medical professionals on their use, so this is of course in addition to that and other assistance we have provided," Ms Psaki said.

India has submitted a

list of seven essential items that it needs on an urgent basis. These are oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders with 10 liters and 45-liter capacity, oxygen generators, oxygen generation plants, remdesivir, favipirivir, and tocilizumab.

Ms Psaki said the US has identified rapid diagnostic testing supplies, personal protective equipment, and additional ventilators available to be transferred to India immediately.

"As requested by India, we will provide raw materials for the production of AstraZeneca Covishield vaccine at Serum Institute of India. I know some of these have been announced, but that's just a little bit of additional details. So, we're and ongoing discussions about what their needs are and how we can meet

them," she said.

"We have taken some significant steps over the last couple of days to address their immediate needs and been in close touch with them at every level, including with prime minister and the president discussing or communicating," she said.

India and the United States, she noted, have two of the highest challenges as it relates to fighting the COVID pandemic so we also take that into account. "But I can assure people who are watching and paying attention that we want to work in partnership with India. We are committed to getting the assistance they need, whether that's oxygen, PPE, therapeutics, tests, raw materials for vaccines, and we'll continue to communicate at the highest level," Ms Psaki said.

Paradeep Phosphate to set up oxygen plants in select hospitals

Paradip : As the country grapples with an acute shortage of oxygen to treat Covid patients, Paradeep Phosphate Ltd (PPL) has decided to install three pressure swing adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants in various health facilities across the State.

The decision was taken because of the surging daily positive case count of Odisha which has already breached the 4,000 marks since the last couple of days. The first oxygen plant will come up in the

The decision was taken given the surging daily positive case count of Odisha which has already breached the 4,000 marks since the last couple of days

Jagatsinghpur district for Rs 18 lakh.

Head of corporate affairs, PPL Sudhi Ranjan Mishra said, "We have approached Jagatsinghpur Collector to identify the hospital where the plant will be installed. In the first phase, PPL will install three plants in selected hospitals of the State. Later, plants will be set

up at other locations taking into consideration the prevailing situation."

Besides, the Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has decided to set up an oxygen plant in its unit at Paradip. It has planned to provide oxygen free of cost to hospitals treating Covid patients. Sources said it



will take at least two-three months for IFFCO to supply oxygen for Covid patients.

However, PPL will install the PSA oxygen plants in health facilities on a war footing. PSA consists of a twin-tower adsorber filled with desiccant. These two

towers are interconnected with valves for automatic change of towers. While one tower is involved in the production, the other is in regeneration to provide an uninterrupted supply of oxygen gas.

This apart, PPL has

opened a Covid vaccination center at its plant site. Earlier, PPL used its CSR funds in boosting the immunity of pregnant and lactating women and children to fight against coronavirus. PPL had also launched a 100-day nutrition program for pregnant, lactating mothers and children aged 0-2 years who were deprived of healthy and nutritious food during the pandemic. Nearly, 637 persons including 65 pregnant women of Kujang block have been benefitted from this program.

A Look At China To Contain Virus



Sirish C. Mohanty

In his address to the nation on April 20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made exhortations for the youth to form small committees to ensure adherence to COVID-19 restrictions. He has also put the onus on states to decide on lockdowns and other measures. Thus, the central government has adopted more decentralized decision-making as opposed to the modus operandi adopted during the first wave. While only time will tell if this is the right approach, policymakers can learn from success stories of defeating the virus using local mobilization.

Comparable to India in terms of population, China was able to control the spread of COVID-19 at a swifter pace. Immense media attention was focused on the initial mishandling by the local government, official secrecy due to the fear of public alarm and political embarrassment, and then the imposition of a very harsh lockdown and

other brisk central directives to contain the virus. The epidemic, reminiscent of the 2008 SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome) crisis, could have been a significant threat to the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party. Thus, all resources were mobilized by President Xi Jinping to tackle this challenge.

At the grassroots, the most critical role was played by the residential committees (RCs). Though officially not part of the state and defined as institutions of self-governance, these committees are the instruments of the party for effective governance and political control. They are mandated to perform administrative tasks, implement policy, mediate local disputes, and assist government agencies with maintaining public surveillance, health, and sanitation, care for the elderly, etc. At the outbreak of the epidemic, after the initial days of confusion and voluntary action by individuals, the RCs

soon took charge.

In Wuhan, for example, all 7,148 communities were closed off. Community workers strictly enforced rules of entry and exit. No residents were allowed to leave, and no non-residents were allowed to access the community area other than for essential medical needs or epidemic control operations. Volunteers were assigned shifts at the gates of the communities and checked access passes. They also made calls to residents asking about family members' health and status, knocked on residents' doors to conduct regular temperature checks, gather information about travel history, etc. RC workers provided home delivery of daily food necessities to people in self-quarantine and elderly residents, often hauling supplies up steep stairs. Other essential tasks included tracing contact, registering and visiting each individual, placing sick persons under community management, and

Comparable to India in terms of population, China was able to control the spread of COVID-19 at a swifter pace.

transferring them to designated medical facilities for quarantine. A large number of youth and college students, often party members, volunteered for the RCs. Such a model was pursued all across the country.

The central leadership led by President Xi was quick in acknowledging this effort of the "first line of defense". It made provisions for the benefit of the workers like subsidies, provision of health equipment, insurance, publicity, and other institutional support. The picture wasn't all rosy. There were also reports of shortages of medical supplies and food items. RC members suffered from burnouts, deteriorating physical and mental health, and also dealt with public frustration. Standard procedures of bureaucracy and a lack of training also hampered the response system. But despite challenges, the epidemic has been successfully contained, and images of celebration in Wuhan and elsewhere in China have given much hope to others.

Undoubtedly, the situation in India is much bleaker. Does this above-mentioned "China model" provide any answers to India's current predicament? Many urban areas have residential associations and local governments that can undertake similar mobilization as RCs in China. However, this cannot be done without a centralized plan of action with the hearty support of the state government, which is the key aspect of this model. In India, several state governments differ from the Central government for political reasons, and sincere efforts to cease spreading the virus become a ritual only. Several states including Odisha entirely depend on the bureaucracy without taking the local bodies or committees into confidence. For example, Police use force and fine to compel people to wear masks; the outcome so far is people constrained to use masks only to keep the police at bay, not the virus. There have to be clear channels to pass down resources and authority from

central to local organizations. Random citizens' committees enforcing laws and restrictions will augur conflict and give further leeway to persons with authority which has to be carefully watched. Mobilization of volunteers for better information dissemination, service delivery, and promoting social distancing can be extremely useful if directed by local governmental organizations to whom higher authority would allocate resources and power.

Ideas of atmanirbharta and leaving states to their means will only increase policy incoherence and unequal access between states with different fiscal capacities and healthcare infrastructure. Given the nature of this pandemic, the need of the hour is for the central leadership to step up and coordinate policy measures across the country pushing the political affiliation to the back seat.

Most importantly, political masters need to lead by example. Flouting social distancing norms and holding public rallies for the sake of electoral gains at these critical hours does not give confidence to a people reeling under the twin impact of the pandemic and economic devastation.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

The special story depicts the chronological political events that catapulted Navin Patnaik into critical of power & made him strong & invincible.

His name would be written in golden letters in the political history of Odisha as the most popular & longest-serving Chief Minister of Odisha.

In the article, You have justifiably heaped profuse praise & extolled his political acumen, & administrative control, (maybe through a loyal bureaucrat), and Good governance through 5 T...

'Navinism' has already become a new model of governance!

Navin Patnaik has already emerged as the "Darling of the Mass".

The opposition leaders have been overshadowed

by the charismatic towering personality of Navin Patnaik & turned themselves into "Pygmies" "

So, Navin Patnaik is the strongest, & most popular Chief Minister Odisha ever had.

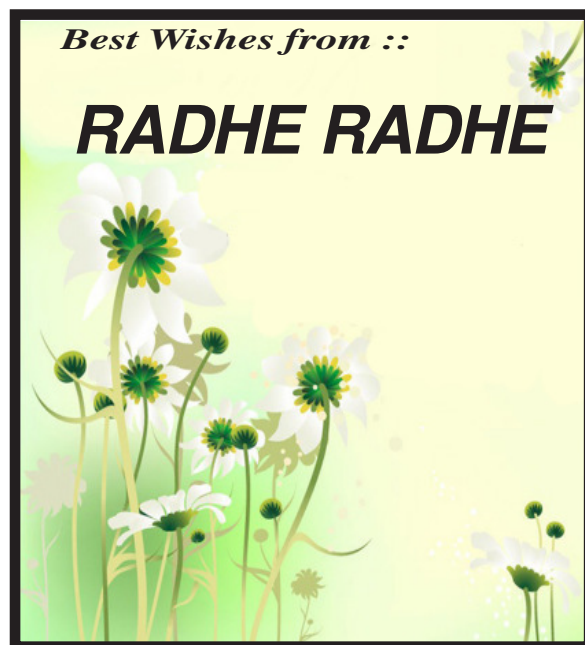
Bharat Patra,
Rtd. Banker & social activist. Kendujhar

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



What's Your Choice- Heaven, or Hell?



Sirish C Mohanty

as the silver bullet is on its way.

This is a viral apocalypse around threatens us with the fear of death. One vital truth we must remember; fear is a major catalyst of the pandemic. Fear syndrome reduces our resistance power making us vulnerable to the virus. If you're free from fear, your body resistance increases much fold making it inaccessible for the virus. It works better than any preventive medication. To overcome the fear syndrome, you may argue, it is easier said than done, but, trust me, it's never impossible; all we have to do is to cherish the art of living a pleasant life and marvel at what the afterlife offers.

Many of us have seen all kinds of beautiful and unfortunate things in the world. From acts of great kindness, love, and the marvels of nature to the darkest shades of humanity - all have become a part of the human experience universally. We can't experience the world in any other way except through sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste, and none of it is everlasting either. So, have we as humans experienced everything this world has to offer, locked in a cycle of pleasure and pain? Do we now see the afterlife as an experience on another plane, something that can open up a new world for us?

Death is no more a taboo it seems. Our seclusion amid its reign has given it a place of bittersweet eventuality, a sense of passivity hitting closer to home, eroding our programmed fear. As the fragility of life becomes our reality, we can't help but turn to the philosophers who contemplated death as the next frontier of the human experience.

Death is no more a taboo it seems. Our seclusion amid its reign has given it a place of bittersweet eventuality, a sense of passivity hitting closer to home, eroding our programmed fear. As the fragility of life becomes our reality, we can't help but turn to the philosophers who contemplated death as the next frontier of the human experience. Since the time of Socrates, the idea of death being a passage to another life has engaged us, prompting philosophers to do what they do best - cultivate the mind - as they feel it would best serve them in the realm where the body is irrelevant. Epicurus came up with the 'you only live once (YOLO) philosophy', simply terming death as a natural end of sensation, advising us to feel everything the physical realm offers to maximize the sensory experience.

In the pursuit of sensations, does humanity shed its fear of death, accepting the reality of the inevitable? The demon of impermanence is in us. Similar to Epicurus, Chinese philosopher Zhuang Zhou believed that death should be celebrated as a milestone in the circle of life, sending off people on a great journey they were fated to embark on. The pandemic has made us all Kisa Gautami, the woman who approached the Buddha to revive her dead son. The Buddha asked her to bring back mustard seeds from a home in her town that had not seen death. Her journey door to door awakened her to the inevitability of the cycle of life, helping her to make peace with the resonance of grief emanating from the love for her child.

Death is the next door

and that is no more true than today. Our isolation is robbing us of many interactions that water our lives and sustain our spirits. In a world of traveled roads, death is the last unprinted destination. As it emerges from the shallows of dread, it takes its place as a natural part of our existence, free of fear, compelling us to cherish the sensation of life and also marvel at what the afterlife offers. What is our next destination after death? Many believe our destination is either heaven or hell, while others believe that after a death we become a ghost and hover around. But, great thinkers offer a different theory: all are within your reach once you overcome the fear of death and develop health-consciously self-confidence.

When a person dies, he loses his body, and his intellect or judicious mind. The memory part of the mind, however, continues to function but only as tendencies within him. He cannot choose anymore because he does not have a judicious mind. Because of this lack of choice, if the memory bank is full of unpleasantness, this unpleasantness can multiply a million times over. For example, right now if you get angry, you can use your judicious mind and control it. But if you did not have this judicious mind, the anger would flare up into

madness. So, once a person has died, whatever is the content of his mind - the moment of death is a significant part - if he has cultivated pleasantness as the general content of his mind, it could multiply much fold because of lack of discernment. At the same time, if he cultivated unpleasantness that can also multiply many folds. If a person gets into extreme states of unpleasantness, we say this person has reached hell. If he has reached extreme states of pleasantness, we say he has reached heaven. Hell and heaven are not places but different states of experience, particularly after death.

There is a beautiful story in the yogic lore. There was a yogi who was 84 years old and he started telling the other yogis around him, 'You know, I am going to die shortly and go to heaven.' The other yogis asked him, 'How do you know you are going to heaven? Do you know what's on God's mind?' The yogi replied, 'I don't care what's on God's mind. I know what's on my mind.'

Be not afraid of anything. It is fear that is the greatest cause of misery in the world. It is fear that is the greatest of all superstitions. It is fear that is the cause of our woes, and it is fearlessness that brings heaven even in a moment.

At Kumbh, Muslim saint holds forth on Gita

Haridwar: With a U-shaped sandalwood paste tilak on his forehead, the traditional mark of a Vaishnavite seer, ochre-colored shirt, and sitting in front of a dhuni, Sri M seems like many of the other seers who have set up camp at the Bairagi Camp area of the MahaKumbh. As he holds discourse on the teachings of the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, it comes as a revelation to know that Sri M was born Mumtaz Ali Khan in a Muslim



family of Kerala. At the Kumbh, he has set up his akhada, Yoga Dham, where there are daily discourses from scriptures, sadhu Seva (service to seers), and chanting of bhajans. "God is known by different names - Allah, Christ, Krishna, and so many others. Despite different names, God is the same. Once we have this knowledge, we see that everyone is seeking the same thing," he says, eyes crinkling into a smile. Awarded the Padma Bhushan last year for his philanthropic and spiritual work - his organisation Satsang Foundation runs schools and clinics for the underprivileged at Madanapalle in Andhra Pradesh- the seer's story is interesting. Born into a prosperous Muslim family in Thiruvananthapuram, he says he was drawn to the yogic way of life since childhood. At the age of 19, he ran off from home to go to the Himalayas in search of a guru, walking from Rishikesh to Badrinath, a distance of around 300 km, dressed as a wandering sadhu. Eventually, after several adventures which he has detailed in his book 'Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master', he met his guru, a Himalayan Yogi, in a cave beyond Badrinath and was initiated into the ancient Nathsampradaya (to which UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath also belongs). He traveled in the Himalayas with his guru for over three years during which he says his guru initiated him into the ancient scriptural teachings. He now gives talks on yoga sutras, Upanishads, and other Vedanta texts combining textual knowledge with the experiences of his wanderings with his guru.

50% Beds For COVID-19 Remain Unoccupied In Bhubaneswar: BMC

Bhubaneswar : The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Tuesday ruled out any shortage of hospital beds or oxygen supply for COVID-19 patients in the city.

In a video message, BMC commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary said the municipal body has around 3,000 general beds, over 400 ICU beds, and around 700 HDU (high dependency unit) beds for the COVID-19

patients. Stating that every bed is connected with an oxygen facility, Chaudhary said around 50% of beds are occupied at present. The BMC teams are engaged in providing the best services to the patients in terms of beds, medicines, and oxygen availability.

At present, 12,000 to 13,000 people are vaccinated per day and efforts are on to increase it, he added. He further said though COVID-19 cases are rising



and there is no declining trend, the BMC is prepared for any exigency.

Expressing his concern over people's negligence towards following COVID-

19 guidelines, the commissioner said the BMC is trying its best to enforce those by imposing a penalty on violators and sealing establishments.

Eminent Odia Writer Padma Shri Manoj Das Passes Away

Bhubaneswar: One of the best storytellers of present times, the man who enchanted writers like Graham Greene and Ruskin Bond, Manoj Das passed away on Tuesday creating a void in the literary scene in India.

He passed away at a Nursing Home in Puducherry on Tuesday at the age of 87. Das was associated with Sri Aurobindo Ashram and was hospitalized for nearly a year at the ashram nursing home with terminal cancer. Ashram sources said he breathed his last around 8:15 pm.

Das had conferred the Padma Bhushan award last year for his contribution in the field of Literature and Education. He was earlier conferred the Padma Shri in 2001. Das was a unique bilingual writer whose stories in both, Odia and English, were equally loved. Known for his simple, magical, and impactful writings, Das not only won the hearts of Odisha's youth, but he also managed to impress novelist Graham Greene. The eminent English writer Graham Greene once said, "He will certainly take a place on my shelves beside the stories of Narayan. I imagine Odisha is far from Malgudi, but there is the same quality in his sto-



ries with perhaps an added mystery". The narration speaks volumes about Das's work. His writings were mainly about human suffering in the villages of his state but he layered them with such fantasy and satire that it left an indelible impression on the mind of readers. His short stories, novels, essays and poems presented a perfect combination of social realism and understanding of the human psyche and faith. His writings not only offered enlightenment but enjoyment too. It encouraged people to ponder over.

Born in 1934 in a small village in Balasore district in Odisha, Das was a child prodigy as his first collection of poems was published when he was just 14.

He is well known for his significant contribution to post-

Independence Odia literature. He started writing in English in 1968 and some of his well-known works are 'A Tiger at Twilight', 'The submerged Valley', 'The Bridge in the moonlit Night', 'Cyclones', 'Mystery of the Missing Cap', 'Myths', 'Legends', 'Concepts and Literary Antiquities of India'. While some of his Odia works are 'Tandralokara Prahari', 'Aakashra Isara', 'Amruta Phala'. Das, though a native of Odisha, had made Puducherry his home for several decades. He was an eminent Marxist who had turned a mystic and had moved to Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry in 1963 in search of his inner quest. He was teaching at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, where most of his writings were

penned. Manoj Das's writings in Oriya and English are noted for its magnificent style, effective use of words and he is rated to be one of India's best storytellers. He is also a recipient of the Sri Aurobindo Puraskar, Sahitya Akademi Award (1972), Orissa Sahitya Akademi Award, Sarala Award, the Sahitya Bharati Award, and BAPASI (Booksellers And Publishers Association of South India) and Saraswati Samman in 2000. He was an extremely learned person who had great mastery over language, said Matri Prasad, a senior inmate of the Ashram. "He had influenced many lives. He played a very important role in expounding for the world at large, the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (of the Ashram)," said Matri Prasad.

His cremation is likely to take place on Wednesday, observing the Covid protocols, Ashram sources said.

In his condolence message, Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, said, "Shri Das has left an indelible mark in the field of literature with his vast variety of immortal works and left a void which can never be filled."

JSW Steel's 2-year plan for its new buy BPSL

Much of the plans though hinge on the Supreme Court ruling on JSW Steel's petition to give it immunity from a probe by the Enforcement Directorate on the former promoters of BPSL

JSW Steel has chalked out a turnaround plan for its recent buy Bhushan Power & Steel that looks to lower the latter's cost of production and expand capacity. The turnaround is imperative for the eventual merger of the new subsidiary with its parent. "We have always followed the strategy - turnaround and merge," Seshagiri Rao, Jt MD & Group CFO, JSW Steel, told media.

JSW Steel had closed the acquisition of BPSL on March 26, in a move that made it the largest steelmaker in the country. The Sajjan Jindal-led company has paid Rs 19,350 crore to the financial creditors of BPSL.

BPSL has an annual capacity of about 2.5 million tons in Jharsguda, Odisha, taking JSW Steel past Tata Steel's India capacity of 19.63 million tons a year. JSW Steel's

capacity now stands at 20.5 million tons a year.

BPSL had a turnover of Rs 8,635 crore as of March 31, 2020.

Rao added that the plan is to turn around BPSL's operations in two years, from the time Supreme Court rules on its petition for immunity from a probe being conducted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The ED is investigating money laundering charges against BPSL's former promoters, and in the process attached company assets worth over Rs 4,000 crore. The success of the deal itself rides on the ruling by the Apex Court. If the Court does rule against JSW Steel, the company will get back its money from the banks, and hand over the keys of BPSL.

The turnaround plan "There are many projects (at BPSL) that are half-



completed or need to be taken up. These projects will substantially lower the cost," Rao said.

These include a coke oven plant that is not yet ready. Instead, BPSL buys coke, which is used as a reducing agent in steelmaking, from the market. Also, the plant in Jharsguda doesn't use the pulverized coal injection

(PCI) method, which could otherwise enable the use of cheaper coal, instead of coke.

"If the plant uses PCI, then cost will come down," Rao added.

Also in the works is to expand BPSL's annual capacity from the present 2.5 million tons to 4 million tons. This too, added Rao, could be done within the

two-year timeline, after the court order.

JSW Steel had the same strategy, of turnaround and merger, with Ispat Industries, which it had acquired in 2010. In 20 months, Ispat was renamed JSW Ispat and merged with the parent. The process is on for Monnet Ispat, another company that JSW Steel had bought

from bankruptcy courts. Sources said Monnet Ispat, which has been renamed JSW Ispat Special Products, has turned EBITDA positive.

Presence in the east BPSL gives JSW Steel a presence in the eastern markets of the country. Till now, its units were present either in the south or west. Through Monnet, which has a unit in Chhattisgarh, JSW Steel entered central India.

Rao pointed out that JSW Steel otherwise incurs high freight costs to cater to its customers in eastern parts. "Through BPSL, entering into the east is possible and we have resources that are available next door. There is a great synergy between the two," Rao added.

JSW Steel had emerged as the most aggressive bidder for iron ore mines that were auctioned in Odisha.

Iron ore price surges to a 10-year high after Vale, Rio miss on output

According to Fastmarkets MB, Benchmark 62% Fe fines imported into Northern China (CFR Qingdao) were changing hands for \$189.61 a tonne on Tuesday, up 4.29% from the previous day - the highest level since 2011.

The high-grade Brazilian index (65% Fe fines) also advanced to a record high of \$222.80 a tonne.

September iron ore on China's Dalian Commodity Exchange ended the daytime trading session 3.6% higher at 1,100 yuan (\$169.28) a tonne, following news that China's crude steel production jumped 19% last month from a year earlier to near a record.

The nation's output of the alloy is booming at the same time as a pollution

crackdown has lifted prices and benefited profit margins at mills.

"Incredibly healthy Chinese steel margins have been the real driving force behind iron ore's move higher over the past week," managing director at Navigate Commodities in Singapore Atilla Widnell told Reuters.

Rio Tinto's iron ore output in the March quarter dropped 2% on an annual basis, while production at Vale fell 19.5% from the previous quarter.

BHP Group Ltd on Wednesday reported a near 2% dip in third-quarter iron ore production but said full-year output is expected to be at the upper end of its forecast.

"With the market relatively tight at the moment, it will certainly see any fail-



ure to meet current guidelines as relatively positive for the price," Daniel Hynes, senior commodities strategist at ANZ Banking Group told Bloomberg.

Vale and Rio both maintained their forecasts for full-year production, though a slower-than-expected recovery at Vale could see the market reset its expectations, he said.

Rio cautioned that its

guidance for the annual output of up to 340 million tonnes was subject to logistical risks associated with bringing 90 million tonnes of replacement mine capacity on stream. It also said that Tropical Cyclone Seroja had impacted its Pilbara mine and port operations in April.

It was a "mediocre quarter" for Rio, Tyler Broda, mining analyst at RBC Capital

Markets, said in a note. Quarterly production was 6% less than the bank's estimate.

"Not all that much is going in the right direction from a bottom-up basis for Rio Tinto as they continue to tackle the various challenges at their operations and projects, but main commodities iron ore and aluminum are both benefiting from the China decarbonisation theme," Broda said.

The iron ore market has kept a wary eye on the still-tight global supply in the wake of a Vale tailings dam disaster in 2019 that had prompted mine closures for safety checks in Brazil. However, real-time shipping data showed an improvement in cargo volumes from the world's top suppliers. Iron ore ship-

ments by Australia and Brazil recovered last week after two weeks of declines, according to Mysteel consultancy. The short-term outlook for iron ore prices remained strong, ANZ's Hynes said, with Chinese steel mills content to accept current high prices for their main feedstock while their margins were so strong. However, he added the cost of ore was now well above fair value, with the risk of a pullback later in the year if Beijing's plans to curb steel production to control greenhouse gas emissions start to impact demand.

"If we saw a 1% fall in Chinese steel production that would potentially wipe out about 15-20 million tonnes of iron ore," said Hynes.

"Will Stop Counting Of Votes"

- : **Madras High Court Shreds Election Commission**
- : **Your institution is singularly responsible for the second wave of COVID-19," the Madras High Court told the Election Commission. The Madras High Court also asked for a plan to enforce Covid rules on May 2 - the day of the results.**

Chennai : The Election Commission is singularly responsible for the second wave of Covid and should probably be booked for murder, the Madras High Court observed today in the sharpest criticism yet of crowded campaigns for the five state polls that continued in the middle of raging virus cases. The court has threatened to stop the counting of votes on Sunday if a "blueprint" is not in place. The Election Commission will react after it sees the order, sources say. "Your institution is singularly responsible for

the second wave of COVID-19. Your officers should be booked on murder charges probably," the Madras High Court told the Election Commission. The election body had failed to enforce Covid safety rules like masks, sanitizers, and distancing during campaigning despite court orders, said the High Court.

"Were you on another planet when the election rallies were held," Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee questioned. The High Court also asked for a plan to enforce Covid rules on May 2 - the day of the results -



by Friday. Without it, the counting could also be stopped, said the High Court. "Public health is paramount. Distressing that constitutional authorities ought to be reminded. It is only when a citizen

survives that he'll be able to enjoy the rights that a democratic republic guarantees," the court said. Orders are expected later today. The High Court was hearing a petition by Tamil Nadu Transport

Minister MR Vijayabaskar seeking Covid compliance in counting halls in Karur constituency, from where he contested. Covid cases have exploded alongside elections held in Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, and Puducherry. Today, India reported 3.52 lakh cases and 2,812 deaths in 24 hours, another grim record.

The Election Commission stopped roadshows and rallies and limited public meetings to 500 people last Thursday, with just three more rounds of voting left in Bengal's record eight-phase election and all other states

do with the vote.

Shortly before the election body's order, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that he was canceling his campaign visit to Bengal the next day because of a Covid meeting. Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who also restricted her campaign soon after, questioned why the Election Commission had waited till the PM's announcement to impose Covid curbs on campaigning.

551 oxygen generation plants to be set up using PM CARES fund

The announcement comes at a time when several hospitals in the country have complained of severe shortages of medical oxygen.



New Delhi : The PM CARES Fund will be utilised to set up 551 oxygen generation plants in public health facilities across the country, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said Sunday. The plants, which will be made operational "as soon as possible", will ensure an uninterrupted supply of oxygen in government hospitals at district headquarters, the PMO added.

The announcement comes at a time when several hospitals in the country have complained of severe shortages of

medical oxygen.

"In line with Prime Minister's direction of boosting the availability of oxygen to hospitals, the PM CARES Fund has given in-principle approval for allocation of funds for installation of 551 dedicated Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) Medical Oxygen Generation Plants inside public health facilities in the country. PM has directed that these plants should be made functional as soon as possible. He said that these plants will serve as a major boost to oxygen availability at the district level," the PMO stated in a press release.

It added that the in-house oxygen generation facility would address "day to day medical oxygen needs of these hospitals and the district".

The PMO said the PM CARES fund had earlier this year allocated Rs 201.58 crore for the installation of an additional 162 dedicated PSA Medical Oxygen Generation Plants inside public health facilities in the country.

Odisha To Extend All Cooperation In 'War Like Situation': Naveen Tells Modi



Bhubaneswar : With the situation fast slipping out of hands due to the unprecedented surge in Covid-19 cases across the country, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday assured the Centre of providing all cooperation in the 'War-like situation'.

Patnaik spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the telephone and discussed the Covid situation in the country.

"It is a war-like situation and Odisha will

extend all cooperation in the fight against Covid at the national level including ramping up oxygen production to assist other states in this emergency," said Patnaik. The statement of the Chief Minister assumes considerable significance in the backdrop of the acute shortage of oxygen faced by Delhi and many other states in the country at present.

Apart from managing the oxygen requirements in the State, the Odisha

government has also provided oxygen to Delhi to bail out the Arvind-Kejriwal government from a crisis.

CM Kejriwal today lauded the efforts of the Odisha government for providing oxygen at a time when several hospitals in the national capital were facing a crisis.

On Thursday a second hospital in the national capital moved to the Delhi High Court seeking an urgent supply of oxygen.

Australia holds mining career camp for Indigenous girls



Twelve Indigenous girls in Australia are being inspired to pursue careers in mining, with a five-day educational camp being held this week.

The inaugural Mining

and Lands camp is hosted by Curtin University in collaboration with the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia and is supported by Ashanti

Gold Australia.

The girls will visit Alcoa and Talison mine sites, as well as engage in various educational activities on campus and the community. Camp attendees are also attending networking events, engaging directly with mining industry representatives.

Staying in Curtin University student accommodation, the girls are also experiencing what university life is like. Further camps are planned for later in the year for both genders, Curtin said.

Odisha-Born Sushant Dash Named CEO Of Tata Starbucks

Bhubaneswar: In a proud moment for Odisha, Sushant Dash has been appointed as the CEO of Tata Starbucks. According to reports, Dash will take charge as the fourth CEO of the global brand's India operations on May 1.

Dash had graduated in economics from Ravenshaw University in Cuttack in 1994. In 1996, he had joined as Associate Research Director in ORG Marg. Then he joined Tata Tea Ltd in 2001 and rose to become a Senior Manager

in Tata Tea Premium.

He has experience in consumer business for more than 20 years and is currently serving as the President of Tata Global Beverages in Bengaluru.

Dash had played a vital role in the team that introduced the Starbucks brand in India. He has also served as a Director of the global coffee chain brand and as President of Starbucks in 2014. He was also the director of Global Brand.

Notably, Starbucks



started its business in India in October 2012. It has more than 215 stores in 17 cities in India.

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Free food...

of intrastate transportation etc," it added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed that it is important that the poor of the country have nutritional support when the country is facing the second wave of coronavirus pandemic. The free food grains distribution scheme under the Prime Minister GaribKalyan Anna Yojana was extended in June for five months till November 2020 with an additional estimated outlay of ₹90,000 crores. The extension of the scheme was announced by the Prime Minister last year when the country was entering the 'unlock' phase from the nationwide lockdown imposed to curtail the spread of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) and to support the poor affected by the halt in the economic activities. The scheme has been rolled out again for the next two months as the country's healthcare infrastructure has reached its capacity and several states have taken steps like complete lockdown, night curfew to contain the spread of the disease. The scheme comes as such measures affecting the economic activities of the country and the pandemic will cause a huge burden on the poor of the country. India on Friday reported 332,730 cases of coronavirus disease in the last 24 hours-the highest since the pandemic broke last year-taking the tally to over 16.2 million.

Odisha Supplies...

it," he said adding that more supplies are needed as according to estimates, Delhi needs 700 MT of oxygen daily. He appealed to all States to help each other and promised to provide them surplus oxygen, medicines and doctors if the COVID-19 situation came under control in Delhi. "We had imposed a six-day lock-down in Delhi. I had promised that I will not sit silent during the lockdown days rather work round the clock to improve the health infrastructure in the national capital. We have engaged ourselves in duty to sort out the shortage of oxygen and beds in hospitals during the lockdown time," he added.

Never Asked...

Covid facilities attached to hospitals. But the explanation did not wash with the court.

"Can you imagine that we can ask for something like this? People are not getting hospitals and we are asking you for beds in luxury hotels. The media is not wrong. Your order is wrong," the High Court said.

"It is beyond thinking that as an institution we will ask for the facility. How can you give facilities to one section? It would be better that you withdraw these orders immediately."

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has given directions to cancel the order.

Last evening, Chanakyapuri sub-divisional magistrate Geeta Grover had said in an order that 100 rooms at the Ashoka would be turned into Covid rooms for judges, judicial officers, and their families.

The order said Primus Hospital would run the Covid care services at the hotel.

"The biomedical waste disposal will be the responsibility of the hospital. The staff of the hotel shall be provided all protective gear and given basic adequate training. Ambulance for transfer facility will be provided by Primus Hospital," the order said. "For any shortage of hotel staff, the same will be provided by the hospital. All the services including rooms, housekeeping, disinfection, and food for patients, etc shall be provided by the hotel," it said, adding that the hospital would collect the charges and make payments to the hotel.

Hospitals in Delhi have been sending out SOS for oxygen, needed by Covid patients, and the High Court has been hearing petitions by many of them.

Reports of a desperate scramble for hospital beds and some dying on roads or at home while waiting for admission have exposed the gravity of the crisis in cities like Delhi where the Covid spike has overwhelmed the health care system. Last evening, Delhi reported the most number of deaths in a day - 380 - and over 20,000 fresh cases.

'Sorry, Didn't Know'

Thieves Return Covid-19 Vaccines Stolen From Hospital

Aday after about 700 doses of Covid-19 vaccines were stolen from the storeroom of a hospital in Haryana's Jind district, the burglars dumped the stolen consignment at a tea stall outside Jind Civil Lines Police Station on Thursday with a "sorry" message.

Cops recovered a note from the box saying, "SORRY- I did not know it was Corona vaccine". CCTV footage from the area of the tea stall was being screened to ascertain the identity of the burglars, police said.

Two unidentified burglars crashed into the storeroom of a government civil hospital in Jind late on

Wednesday night and fled with boxes containing 182 vials of Covishield and 440 dosages of Covaxin. The thieves had broke open four locks of the storeroom and the deep freezer.

The nursing staff was called by a sweeper who came to the hospital on Thursday morning and said that the locks of the storeroom were broken and related items of the vaccines were missing. However, other valuable items like a laptop and Rs 50,000 cash that were also lying in the storeroom had not been stolen.

An official said that after the robbery, no vaccine was left at the hospital for inoculation in the district.

Transmuting The Tatas

Chairman N Chandrasekaran is revamping the \$106 billion group into a future-ready, tech-enabled conglomerate. He is the highest-paid executive in India, gets annually Rs 65.25-crore remunerations



After taking over on May 30, 2017, Natarajan Chandrasekaran's first major decision as Chairman, Tata Group, was rather symbolic of the changes in store. He asked architects to refurbish Bombay House, the iconic headquarters of the conglomerate. The heritage building on HomiMody Street in Mumbai's Fort area had never been altered since it was built in 1924, based on the design of Scottish architect George Wittet, who also designed the Gateway of India. The building had cracks in the roof, limited natural light, and was vulnerable to termites. Chandrasekaran, who started his career with TCS and contributed hugely to its growth over three decades, wanted to make Bombay House vibrant, incorporating his idea of 'One Tata'.

Now, it is readying to build on those. With big opportunities looming in e-commerce, electronics, electric mobility, medical and diagnostics, renewable energy, and payments, Chandrasekaran is re-emphasising customer-centricity and financial fitness of highly leveraged manufacturing companies. Tata Steel, with Rs 86,170 crore net debt, for instance, has to get out of troubles in Europe and focus back on the Indian market. Tata Power, with a debt of Rs 36,363 crore, needs to focus on renewables and consumer businesses, and Tata Motors, with Rs 54,700 crore debt in the automobile

business, has to get rid of debts, and ready for electric mobility.

"Every business and industry is becoming an ecosystem business. It is not that you can create a product and then try to sell it. The group, he says, is working on Simplification, Synergy, and Scale (3Ss). Each firm will be driven by artificial intelligence, data analytics, and Cloud computing. They have to bring down the debt to zero and follow sustainable practices.

Compassionate Management

As the son of a lawyer, Chandrasekaran lived a middle-class life in his early years, walking three kilometers to school, from his village Mohanur in the Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu. After graduation, he wanted to be a banana farmer as his father had switched to agriculture. But life changed after the MCA degree from the National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli.

Chandrasekaran brought together a team of tech experts from TCS and other companies to build Tata Digital in 2019. Then, during the peak of the Covid pandemic, the group got into medical equipment. It set up Tata Medical and Diagnostics (Tata MD) to provide patient-centric solutions and making healthcare accessible and reliable. The first product is the world's first commercially available CRISPR Cas-9-based Covid-19 test. The company

will also manufacture ventilators. "We are trying to create a large-scale business? This whole stack of medical equipment has a lot of demand and potential for India," says Chandrasekaran. The business is an extension of its capabilities in electronics and manufacturing. But that is not enough for competing with global manufacturers.

Clustering & Cleaning

Chandrasekaran reorganised around 30 group companies under 10 clusters. This was largely intended to optimise synergy among group companies, which were working in silos. The infrastructure cluster, for instance, comprises Tata Power, Tata Realty, Tata Housing, Tata Projects, and Tata Consulting Engineers.

Tata Steel was reorganised into four distinct businesses - long products, downstream, mining, and utilities and infrastructure. It will focus back on the lucrative Indian market. About 10 years ago, two-thirds of production was coming from Europe. Now, it is two-thirds from India. The domestic business produced 12.18 MT of steel as against Europe's 6.9 MT in the first nine months of 2020/21. The domestic business is hugely profitable because of captive iron ore mines.

Similarly, Tata Motors took the call to consolidate or exit small businesses and focused on three-passenger cars in India, commercial vehicles, and Jaguar Land Rover. It shut down the

production of Nano, the dream project of Ratan Tata, as it failed to find buyers despite upgrades. A year back, the Tata Motors board approved a plan to float passenger vehicle business, including EVs, as a subsidiary to bring in strategic investments. Guenter Butschek, MD & CEO, Tata Motors, said in the 2019/20 annual report, "The subsidisation of the passenger vehicle business enables the realisation of its full potential with mutually beneficial strategic alliances and better access to products, architectures, powertrains, new-age technologies, and capital."

In another overhaul, Tata Power plans to transfer its renewable power assets and respective debt in the portfolio to an infrastructure investment trust (InvIT). The move will reduce the company's net debt to half. It has reduced the debt by Rs 7,552 crore in 2020, wants to cut it further to an overall Rs 25,000 crore by creating an InvIT and selling a stake in it. It is in the final stage of talks with PE funds. It has also decided to merge the loss-making Coastal Gujarat Power, which runs a 4,000 MW imported coal-fired Mundra power plant, with itself for simplification and to provide financial support.

Businesses Of Scale

In India, Tata Steel increased capacity to over 20 MT, building 3MT unit in Kalinganagar and acquiring Bhushan Steel (5.6 MT) and steel business of

Usha Martin (1MT). Chandrasekaran expects steel consumption in India to grow significantly over the coming decade. "So, we made the bold bet and acquired Bhushan Steel and Usha Martin. Those are proving to be right with the turn of the market and increase in demand," he says. But the fact is that it is competing with equally efficient JSW Steel and ArcelorMittal Nippon (former Essar Steel) in a capital-intensive sector. T.V. Narendran, MD & CEO, Tata Steel, recently said the company's domestic business has the highest profitability in the world and delivered a 20 per cent EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) margin even during the worst of times. At Tata Motors, the passenger car business has doubled the market share, though from a low base. "We have launched a Tata EV ecosystem. We are seeing huge demand for EVs. And we will be saying more things about our foray into EV transformation. JLR is also going through a massive transformation. All these are visible in the operating performance," says Chandrasekaran. Tata Motors is bringing in the expertise of multiple Tata companies - like Tata

Power, Tata Chemicals, and Croma - to build the EV ecosystem. The market share in the passenger car business rose to 9.5 per cent in October-December 2020 from 4.8 per cent in 2019/20 with growing demand for Tiago, Tigor, Altroz, and Nexon. In commercial vehicles, though, the market share dip has not been arrested yet - it was 29.6 per cent in October-December 2020 compared to 45.1 per cent in 2018/19.

Tata Power, which has decided to shift focus from coal-fired power plants to renewable and consumer businesses, will increase production to 25 gigawatts in five years from 11 gigawatts at present (including thermal, hydel, and renewable). All additions will be in renewable energy. It is also focused on consumer renewable energy by rooftop solar, microgrids, and distribution. However, the renewable energy space has turned very competitive with investments from Adani Group, JSW, and Shapoorji Pallonji Group. French energy major Total has agreed to acquire a 20 per cent stake in Adani Green Energy, which has set an ambitious target of building a 25-gigawatt renewable energy portfolio.

Mukesh Ambani buys UK hotel used in Bond films

Reliance Industries to buy UK's 900-year-old Stoke Park estate for \$79m, adding to the group's hospitality assets.



Reliance Industries Ltd., controlled by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, bought Stoke Park Ltd. for \$79 million, adding an iconic locale that's been the setting for two James Bond films to its portfolio of tourism properties.

A wholly-owned unit of Reliance Industries will buy Stoke Park, which owns and manages a hotel, sports, and leisure facilities in Buckinghamshire, for 57 million

pounds (\$79 million), said an exchange filing late Thursday. The acquisition will add to Reliance's consumer and hospitality assets, the filing said.

The property's rolling golf course has been famous since James Bond played a game with Auric Goldfinger there in the 1964 blockbuster. Since then, the estate with the Georgian-era mansion set amid 300 acres of parkland has also been a backdrop in productions like "Bridget Jones's Diary" and Netflix Inc.'s British Royal Family drama "The Crown". In real life, its 49 luxury bedrooms and suites, 27-hole championship golf course, 13 tennis courts, and 14 acres of private gardens attract wealthy tourists from across the world.

The latest marquee acquisition for Ambani's retail-to-refining conglomerate marks its pivot toward consumer offerings and yet another high-profile British brand purchase. Reliance bought struggling U.K.-based toy store chain Hamleys in 2019 and is seeking to revive it.

Flush with \$27 billion in fresh capital after selling stakes in Reliance's retail and digital units last year, Ambani is helping a transformation as he seeks to build

consumer services into an equal-sized pillar for Reliance Industries, paring dependence on profits from its traditional oil refining business. Acquiring marquee global brands underscores that strategy.

Private Gardens

Although the Stoke Park estate has a recorded history of over 900 years, it was used as a private residence until 1908, according to its official website.

Ambani has a net worth of \$71.5 billion, making him the 13th richest person in the world, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. The group "will look to enhance the sports and leisure facilities at this heritage site," Reliance said in the filing. Ambani's conglomerate has equity holding in EIH Ltd., which runs the chain of five-star Oberoi Hotels. The U.K. is emerging as a real estate hotspot for wealthy Indians. Adar Poonawalla, chief executive officer of the Serum Institute of India Ltd. - the largest vaccine manufacturer in the world - agreed to rent a property in Mayfair for about 50,000 pounds (\$69,300) a week, a record for the exclusive London neighborhood, Bloomberg reported last month.



'Ease of Doing Business' at the Cost of Tribal Land and Livelihood

The Odisha government released a notification on February 15 to convert common land for industrial use, increasing the cap on land purchase by private parties from 200 acres to 500 acres.

New Delhi: As the movement against the three farm laws intensifies across India, tribal farmers in Odisha are facing new threats amid the government's latest move to allow corporates to purchase land. As per a notification released by the state government on February 15, the rural land cap for purchase by a private company has been increased from 200 acres to 500 acres.

"...the State government do hereby notify that limits of extent of land beyond which provisions of Rehabilitation and Resettlement Rules under the Act shall apply in cases of purchase by a private company through negotiation with the owner of the land shall be enhanced from two hundred (200) to five hundred (500) acres of dry land or

equivalent extent of irrigated or wetlands in rural areas and from fifty (50) acres to hundred (100) acres in urban areas subject to any further notification as may be issued by the Government from time to time," says the notification.

Activists and farmers in the state fear that the move is targeted to please businesses and is an attack on the land rights of tribal farmers, further diminishing their bargaining power. After a long-standing movement, the 2013 Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation Act was enacted, but to further industrialize the state, the Odisha government now wants to convert common land into private holdings, say activists.

While the government claims that the idea of the notification is to 'ease doing business, but with the land acquisition being termed as the "biggest hurdle", the move is being seen as an attempt to trample land rights. "The whole idea of the notification



is to override the rehabilitation and resettlement policy of 2003 and 2006," said Advocate SankarPani, who deals with cases about land movements.

Sandeep Patnaik, a researcher on land rights-based in Odisha, said: "The first problem is that the government is brushing its hands off of any rehabilitation since now the land will be privately owned and the spirit of rehabilitation and

resettlement Act is being trampled upon. Moreover, when different companies try to exert pressure on tribals to give away their land, those with limited bargaining power will not stand a chance. The move will affect the ongoing movement in the state against privatization and taking away of tribal lands."

The notification, issued by the Revenue and Disaster Management (R&DM) Department, puts the onus of

negotiation on landowners, many in this case being tribal farmers with limited or no bargaining power, he added.

Moreover, private companies can now buy 100 acres in urban areas which was earlier limited to 50 acres. "This is being done as a proactive measure for quick and seamless development of industrialization in the state," R&DM secretary B P Sethi said. In Odisha, protests have also been going on in the tribal

hinterland against the Centre's three farm laws, and activists in the state see this notification as an extension of those very farm laws for which there is a countrywide farmers' protest to demand repeal.

Activist Prafulla Samanta said: "2013, Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation Act clearly stipulated the minimal use of agricultural land for industrial development, but now, the area limit has been extended from 200 acres to 500 acres. This is sheer manipulation of the law to benefit the corporates since they will no longer need to conduct public hearings or even compensate those who lose agricultural or even common land."

He said: "In Odisha, we have been opposing contract farming, which will lead to excessive privatization of land, completely erasing out tribal farmers. The maximum amount of land, therefore, will be transferred, which is also a threat to food security."



The Big Bull

Abhishek Bachchan is an unconvincing messiah in this blotched scam



Blame it on Bollywood that oftentimes makes films based on true events and real-life personalities with a conventional template that try to paint an empathetic image of their subject. Recent films like Sanju, Shakuntala Devi, Super 30, which have been inspired by real people have desperately tried to make the audience feel for the protagonists and The Big Bull is no different.

Abhishek Bachchan starrer is loosely based on the life of the infamous stockbroker Harshad Mehta and it appears the film attempts to project a Robinhood image of the scamster while sketching a silver lining on one of India's biggest scams ever. The film takes us through the rise and fall of Hemant Shah (Bachchan) and how he dreams to become the first billionaire of the country. Shah is visionary, ambitious, and daring. He

will stop at nothing before he makes it to the top but he has to pay a big price for it.

Shah's journey oscillates between past and present as director and co-writer Kookie Gulati chooses Meera Rao (Ileana D'Cruz), the journalist

turned author who unraveled the scam to the world as the talking head to narrate the story. However, he pushes the audience into the world of the stock market without any prior warning. Before we know who Shah is, the audience is exposed to his fate. With

an abrupt start, it's difficult to concede to the premise of the film and you're left scratching your head with some basic questions like - who is Harshad Mehta, what is the scam 1992, what is his fault, why is the incident so hyped. Of course, you get answers to these but they're too superficial and muffled that you are barely excited to explore. It's a long film with a run time of two and a half hours but you're ripped off of details and it fails to hit reciprocity between the audience and Shah's ambition. Your only clue to 'mother of all scams' is the big multi-crore figures that Bachchan and his inmates keep talking about.

Gulati tries his best to add some Bollywood to this retelling of Mehta's life.

There are songs, romance, and a helpless brother too but these ineffective subplots dilute the urgency and richness of the narrative, never providing the characters with a room to breathe or plot to build momentum. This is why despite a dramatic protagonist that is inspired by ambition and greed, it seldom has the charm to hold the popcorn thriller.

Although Abhishek has the dimension of being a

grip by limiting its characters. It's pitiful to see how seasoned actors like Saurabh Shukla, Supriya Pathak, and Mahesh Manjrekar have so little to contribute to the film. Throughout the film, it feels like the makers expect you to have seen the recently released web series Scam 1992. Lately, the Harshad Mehta scam is a recallable tale, thanks to Hansal Mehta's piquant show which makes it harder to fall for the very long film. Largely, it is



man to rely upon. We have seen him doing so in Guru (2007) but still he can't find luster here. He loses his Gujarati accent more than often and we hardly see his character transforming in a decade. The film could have done with a lot more but the Big Bull's Shah is very confusing. I mean, why would you believe he is a messiah when he looks down upon everyone and does a crooked laugh every 10 minutes? It's left to Ileana as Meera and Sohum Shah as Viren to give the film a skein of reality. They are the ones who manage to hold the plot together. The Big Bull loses

unfair to compare a web show to a film but Akin to Pratik Gandhi's Mehta, Bachchan's Shah appears fabricated and botched. However, the film wins a point for its soundtrack. The theme song, sung and written by Carry Minati is a track that will stay with you.

To summarise, with new content finding space on OTT every single day, it is harder than ever to grasp the audience's attention, especially when you serve them with something fresh in their memories. The Big Bull suffers big time here.

The Big Bull is streaming on Disney+ Hotstar.

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