

151 CBI Cases Pending Against MPs/MLAs, 58 Punishable With Life Imprisonment

The oldest pending case is in Patna, where the accused was charge-sheeted on June 12, 2000. The amicus suggested in case, additional courts are required, the high courts and the appropriate government shall constitute additional special courts.

The Supreme Court has been informed that a total of 151 cases are pending against sitting and former MPs/MLAs in special CBI courts across the country and as many as 58 cases are punishable with life imprisonment. However, in nearly one-third of the cases, the trial is moving at snail's pace - charges have not been framed, though offences were committed several years back.

Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, appointed amicus curiae in a 2016 petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking direction to fast-tracking of criminal trials against sitting and former MPs/MLAs, has filed the report in the top court. He has been assisted by advocate Sneha Kalita in the matter.

The fourteenth report, in the matter, said: "It may be noted that out of 151 cases pending trial before the Special



Courts, CBI, as many as 58 cases are punishable with life imprisonment. In 45 cases, even the charges have not been framed, though the offences alleged to have been committed several years back."

The CBI has furnished a status report dated August 19, to the amicus mentioning the details of the cases pending trial before different CBI courts and those under investigation. The CBI cases pending investigation against MPs/MLAs are 37.

The oldest pending case is in Patna, where the accused was charge-sheeted on June 12, 2000. The report highlighted inordinate delay in several cases pending trial before CBI courts in different parts of the country.

According to the Enforcement Directorate's status report, a total number of 51 Members of Parliament, both sitting and former, are accused in cases arising out of offences under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. However, the report does not show as to how many MPs/MLAs are sitting and/or former legislators.

The report suggested that courts before which the trials are pending may be directed to expedite the trial of all pending cases on day-to-day basis in terms of Section 309 of the CrPC. "All the High Courts may be directed to issue administrative instructions to the effect (Page-8)

Modi Govt's Rs 6 lakh crore monetisation plan

Projects have been identified across sectors, with roads, railways and power being the top segments.

New Delhi, Aug 24: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on August 23 unveiled an ambitious Rs 6 lakh crore National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) that included unlocking value by involving private companies across infrastructure sectors -- from passenger trains and railway stations to airports, roads and stadiums.

Projects have been identified across sectors, with roads, railways and power being the top segments. Here's all about Modi Govt's Rs 6 lakh crore monetisation plan.

Railways-Asset Monetisation

A total of 400 stations, 90 passenger trains, railway stadiums and colonies, and the famed Konkan and hill



railways are among the assets identified by the government for monetisation. Railway is the second biggest sector, after road, identified in the ambitious national monetisation plan. Monetisation of railways' brownfield infrastructure assets would garner over Rs 1.52 lakh crore in four years till fiscal 2025. Railway assets would contribute 26 per cent of the Rs 6 lakh crore National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP).

Asset Monetisation Power Transmission

The government aims to garner over Rs 45,200 crore through monetising power transmission assets by FY 2025 as part of its ambitious asset monetisation plan. The total value of assets considered for monetisation is estimated at Rs 45,200 crore over FY 2022-25. The assets considered for monetisation over FY 2022-25 aggregate to 6.0 gigawatt (GW). Out of which, about 3.5 GW is from hydel assets

and about 2.5 GW is renewable energy (RE) assets which includes solar and wind. The total value of assets considered for monetisation is estimated at Rs 39,832 crore over FY 2022-25.

Telecom Asset-Monetisation

The government expects to realise Rs 35,100 crore from the partial sale of Bharatnet fibre assets and around 13,500 mobile towers owned by state-run telecom firms as part of its national monetisation pipeline.

Asset Monetisation-Stadiums

The government has announced plans to monetise the iconic Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN) Stadium in the national capital along with another national stadium and two regional centres. (Page-13)

Taliban Says India, Pakistan Can Fight Among Themselves on Border



Kabul, Aug 29: Abbas Stanikzai - tipped India and Pakistan should not use Afghanistan in their internal fight, Sher Mohammad to be the war-torn nation's foreign minister - has told an exclusive interview, reiterating that the Taliban want good relations with all their neighbors.

Asked about fears that the Taliban may be hostile towards India or team up with Pakistan to target the country, Stanikzai said what comes up in the media is "often wrong". "There is no such statement or indication from our side. We want good relations with all our neighboring countries," he said.

The Taliban leader added that he was mindful of the long political and geographical dispute between India and Pakistan but they hoped Afghanistan would not be used in their "internal fight".

Asked about fears that Taliban may be hostile towards India or team up with Pakistan to target the country, Stanikzai said what comes up in the media is "often wrong".

"We hope they do not use Afghanistan in their internal fight; they have a long border, they can fight amongst themselves on the border. They should not use Afghanistan for this and we will not let any country use our land for this," he said.

In an earlier outreach to

India, Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen had said the Taliban never had issues with India's projects in Afghanistan but was opposing their support to the "puppet" government of Ashraf Ghani.

Responding to a question on India's investments in Afghanistan (Page-13)

AP surprises Odisha with foundation stone spree in Kotia villages

The spate of activities by officials of the neighbouring state caught the Koraput administration un-awares which had put up a strong show to thwart the AP moves on Independence Day.

Jeypore, Aug 20: Renewing its aggressive posture in the disputed Kotia cluster of villages, Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday laid foundation stone for several projects in the area, taking the Odisha administration by complete surprise.

An AP team, led by project administrator of Parvatipuram ITDA P Kurmanath and officials from Salur under Vizianagaram district arrived at PhatuSenari and PhagunaSenari villages where they conducted "bhumi puja" for an anganwadi center, arogya center, farmers' hall and panchayat office besides carrying out a plantation drive.

The spate of activities by officials of the neighbouring state



Andhra Pradesh officials carry out plantation at PhatuSenari village in Kotia.

caught the Koraput administration un-awares which had

put up a strong show to thwart the AP moves on Inde-

pendence Day. However, only a handful of locals accompa-

nied them to the sites and the officials went back to AP after conducting the "bhumi puja" quietly. Before returning, they told the locals that the planned establishments will be beneficial for them.

Earlier, the AP officials and political parties from Vizianagaram district had not only planned "bhumi puja" for government offices but also wanted to rename the villages in Telugu. That was neutralized when leaders of all political parties and Koraput administration camped at PhatuSenari and sealed the border to stop any movement from AP side. Police and magistrates were deployed for maintaining law and order too. Koraput Collector

MdAbdaalAkhtar did not respond while BDO of Pottangi block VedBhushan said that he got information about the "bhumi puja" through media only. "The AP side should maintain status quo in Kotia as per orders of the Supreme Court and not violate it", he added. The two states have been at loggerheads over boundary demarcation as well as ownership of Kotia cluster of villages. After unveiling welfare schemes in Kotia last year, AP tried to hold panchayat elections too in bordering areas. On its part, Odisha Government has hit back with announcement of a slew of development plans besides grounding infrastructure projects.

48 Mining Lease Tenders Cancelled In Odisha's Malkangiri

As many as 48 mining lease tenders for minor minerals have been cancelled by the Malkangiri district collector Vishal Singh following the recommendation of the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (Southern Range)

Malkangiri, August 24: The development comes after an investigation by the RDC into allegations levelled against the then Collector Y Vijay over irregularities in the entire tender process for the mining lease in the district. The former collector of the district was accused of taking bribe for awarding the rights to bidder. He was also blamed for taking the tender boxes home and keeping them for around three days. Senior Congress leader Pradeep Majhi had then demanded suspension of the collector and an impartial probe into the matter. However, the said collector had then rubbished the allegations and said that the tender was done as per the procedure. He had further clarified that he took the tender boxes home because of security concerns at the office. Meanwhile, after the cancellation of mining lease tenders, Majhi has demanded Odisha government to carry out a thorough probe into the case and take exemplary action against the erring official(s) who were hand in glove in looting the natural resources of the State. The scrapping off the tenders proves the fixing of the mining lease tenders. This is just the tip of the iceberg as the many top officers and mining mafia are involved in the case, said Majhi while reacting over the development. As per reports, new tenders will be floated for the 48 mining lease for minor minerals.



Direct Elections For Mayor, Chairperson

The Odisha government's decision to hold direct elections for the post of Mayor of Municipal Corporations and Chairperson of Municipalities and Notified Area Councils (NAC) in the State has been welcomed by people. As per the existing norms, corporators elect mayor in a municipal corporation while councillors of a municipality elect the chairperson. The State Housing and Urban Development Department on Friday issued a draft notification to amend the Odisha Municipal (Delimitation of Wards, Reservation of Seats and Conduct of Election) Rules 1994 for the election of Mayor and Chairperson by people through direct voting. "Earlier, Mayor was

being chosen not by people but by corporators. I

appreciate the move taken by the State

government. Because, I feel people should have a say in the selection of Mayor," said a youth of Bhubaneswar.

"Now, people or voters can say that whom they had elected become chairman or mayor. If we see the decision from a party's perspective, it has been taken to maintain discipline and avoid infighting," said a resident of Kendrapara. However, the Opposition has targeted the government over the move. The BJP alleged that the State government hurriedly notified the



Municipal Amendment after the saffron party filed a petition in the Orissa High Court over delay in the ULB polls.

"The Odisha Municipal (amendment) bill and Odisha Municipal Corporation (amendment) bill were passed in the State Assembly in 2018, but why the government was in slumber for the past three years. Now, the government has hurriedly notified this to delay the polls further," alleged BJP leader Samir Dey. Welcoming the draft notification, Congress congratulated the State

government. Congress MLA Suresh Routray said, "We had demanded direct election for the posts of Mayor of Municipal Corporations and Chairperson of Municipalities and Notified Area Councils (NAC). Now, people will directly choose the heads that they think suitable."

Reacting to the allegations of BJP, BJD MLA Ananta Narayan Jena said, "All the procedure is being conducted as per the Municipal Corporation Act Manual. Now, we have to wait for the feedback of people."

"For us, both direct and indirect elections are same. The BijuJanata Dal is always with the people and will remain in future. The party is ready to face any kind of election," he added.

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ଡ. ଅରୁଣ କୁମାର ସାହୁ

ମାନ୍ୟବର ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, କୃଷି ଓ
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ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

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(Signature)

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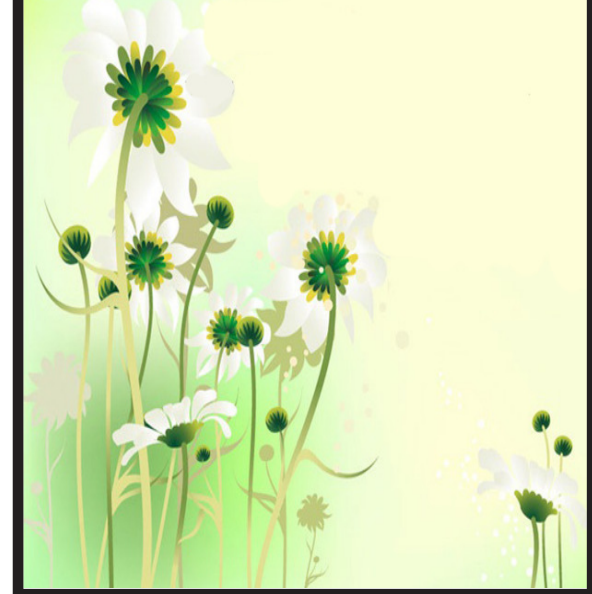
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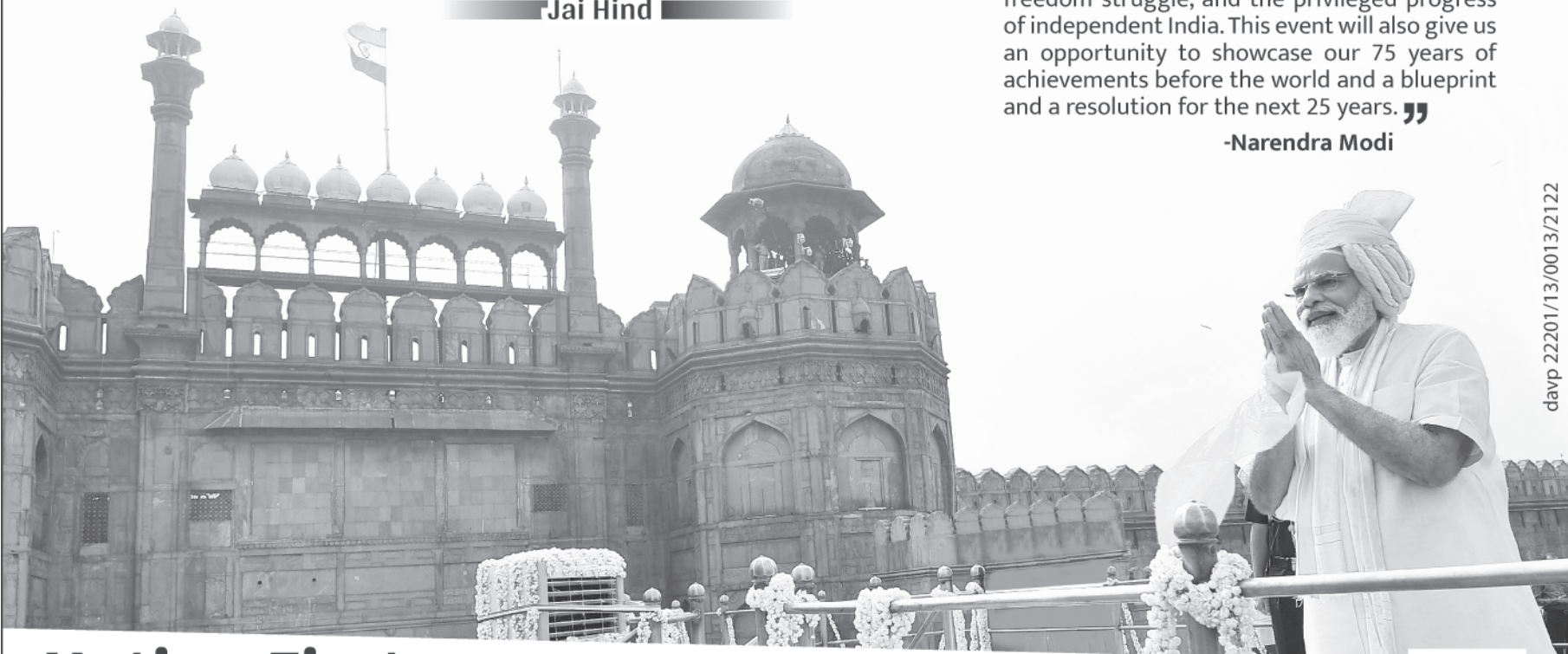
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Afghan maze

India needs deft handling to play the game



Prof. Shivaji Sarkar

Former HOD in English journalism in IIMC, Delhi

The murky Afghan situation has raised serious concern for India. It was never a strong player but was able to make a niche among Afghans with its humanitarian aid and \$ 3 billion investments since 2001 US blitzkrieg for rebuilding a devastated country. Geopolitics is to have repercussions on the subcontinent not only in trade terms but overall security.

Rightly India avoided US prodding to be a military ally, possibly learning from the Sri Lanka peace-keeping experiment. The stakes were always high at this melting pot. But what can India do now? India has been investing in a relationship in an unstable regime and Afghans coming for training have always acknowledged the warm gestures. Indian diplomacy played a critical role in

emotional security, cultural ties, and whatever level of trade and rebuilding mechanism it could provide. Thousands of Afghans are in India for work, training, re-skilling, education, and medical treatment. Over 2,200 students of Afghan-origin studying in India on scholarship stare at an uncertain future. The Indian Council of Cultural Relations would continue to extend the help.

Though not unexpected India is hurt that the 20-year US war against terrorism led by Taliban offshoots leading to the killing of Osama bin Laden and its top hierarchy strangely 'ends' in replacing Taliban with Taliban. It surprises India than Saudi Arabia or Qatar despite having good relations are supporting and Turkey taking a strong position with resurgent

religious feelings. Pakistan that was feeling run down by the US for giving preference to India would now not miss an opportunity to embarrass India.

In the melee whatever the reason, the country got distanced with Iran, a friend for decades, loses rupee-petro deals and despite significant involvement in developing Chabahar port, a gateway to Central Asia is now virtually left in the lurch. Iran even has its embassy open in Kabul along with Russia and China. Iran cannot be faulted. Now Taliban is a concern for it and Iran has to protect its interests.

It would be a natural endeavor for India to reconnect with Iran. The relationships continued despite US sanctions. Sudden withdrawal by India was surprising for Iran too. India has to make efforts to renew the relationship. It would be useful for geopolitics as well as practical economic considerations. A better with Iran would help continue the access to Central Asia with which its business relations are strengthening.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited five countries in the region - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan - last year. An additional \$ 1 billion line of credit to widen connectivity and energy sectors was issued and a business council was formed. At present, India's commercial presence in Central Asia is led by public

sector entities-Punjab National Bank and ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) have operations in Kazakhstan. Private investments include the Sun Group, which operates the Yubileinoe gold mine in Kazakhstan, and companies such as KEC International Limited and Cosmopolitan Builders and Hoteliers Limited, which have executed projects in Tajikistan. The present flight detours and difficult land travels might affect the ties and business deals might become expensive.

That India is not friendless is testified by the safe passage it could arrange for its envoy diplomats and Indian nationals. Still, it is a foreign policy setback and national security concern.

An immediate concern is whether its borders with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir would require mover investments to secure it or not as J&K remains high on the mujahideen agenda. Taliban raiding the embassy in Kabul and consul office in Herat speaks volumes. India has to find out a balancing approach in dealing with the Taliban as ostpolitik could not be an answer nor perhaps it getting involved in anti-Taliban western groupings as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has already called for. Even distancing from it would not be easy as India has deeper financial and trade interests with the West.

The Afghan failure of the US is reflecting also on the dollar. This is adding to

global inflation and it would create further troubles for India. Rising petrol prices, RBI pressure to reduce taxes on petroleum products, and government revenue conundrum add to the crisis.

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan will bear an adverse impact on India's bilateral trade with it, according to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT). Trade between the two nations amounted to \$1.4 billion in 2020-21 and \$1.52 billion in 2019-20. It has hit the Afghan traders also. Their exports, for now, are thawed and restoration depends on how situations normalize.


Confederation of All India Traders says that prices of some commodities may also go up in the Indian markets due to uncertainty over bilateral trade and relations with Afghanistan. Exports from India stood at \$826 million whereas imports amounted to \$510 million in 2020-21. The not-so-large volume of trade may not look monetarily important but strategically these help both countries.

India's significant contribution in its rebuilding and investments in Afghanistan too would be missed there. The fundamentalist regime is still poised against India as the ransacking of consular premises and kidnapping of many Indians from near the airport indicates. For now, it is not an easy task to continue the operations.

India had an ambitious plan with the initiative of the

International North-South Corridor spanning Iran, central Asia, and Eurasia. It is supposed to emerge as a major connector with Modi's concept linking the corridor to the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran rail link, now operational. It is also supposed to be linked to Chabahar and a dedicated freight corridor having special economic zones on its fland being built by India. The Chabahar-Sistan-Baluchistan-Central Asia/Afghanistan route till recently was considered less risky than the high-risk provinces of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. With changing political scenarios this too is likely to become difficult.

Is China outsmarting India with its "one belt, one road" move? Its continued consular presence in Afghanistan speaks volumes. China is becoming a tough contender not only at the borders but also in the international business arena. China is now the largest trade partner of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the second-largest trade partner of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the third-largest trade partner of Tajikistan. In 2013, Kyrgyzstan threw a spanner against the sale of oilfields to OVL.

India has to work deftly to reestablish itself and outdo its rivals in and around Afghanistan to carry on its business and diplomacy in a tough world where even the world bodies remain as mere spectators. 

Hockey Heroes Get Rousing Welcome at Sundargarh



Sundargarh: Odisha's hockey heroes Olympic medalists Birendra Lakra and AmitRohidas and women team's Deep Grace Ekka and NamitaToppo were given a rousing reception on arrival at the soil of their home district Sundargarh on 21st August. All four players hail from different villages of the Sundargarh district. So it was quite natural for Sundargarh people to greet the sons and daughters of the soil on their arrival. They lined up to have a glimpse of hockey stars who were taken to Sundargarh town in a special car procession with former India captain and

Olympian DilipTirkey accompanying them.

En route to the felicitation venue players were also felicitated by several organizations of the town. Officials of the district administration and sports officials welcomed them warmly for scripting history at Tokyo. They were felicitated by the district administration at a special event organized at BikashBhawan. District collector Nikhil PawanKalyan, hockey legend PadmashreeDilipTirkey, Talsara MLA BhabaniBhoi, Rajgangpur MLA Dr.Rajen Ekka, SDC Chairman

BinayToppo, and other senior officers attended the function.

All the four players shared their experiences of the Olympics with the audience. District Collector Nikhil PawanKalyan, while praising the performances of hockey teams, said, "Sundargarh with its abundant hockey talents has created a special niche for itself at the national level." "I feel Sundargarh district should be rechristened as "Hockey Garh" for its contribution to hockey. He further said that hockey infrastructure being developed in Rourkela and other parts of Sundargarh district would be further

strengthened as a result of state government's priority in the development of sports".

Former Indian captain DilipTirkey, who holds the distinction of playing the highest number of matches for the country (412 matches) said, "In my playing days we only dreamt of getting the opportunity to play in Olympics. But now I feel proud that BirendraLakra and AmitRohidas have turned his dreams of winning medals into reality." All four players expressed happiness that the hockey team's performance will become instrumental in creating more interest among the new generation for the sport.

BirendraLakra told the audience they would bring gold in the next Olympics.

Later "sons of the soil" were felicitated at the function. Apart from district administration many civil organizations also felicitated the hockey heroes. Special arrangements were made by the administration for the four players to travel to their native places following the felicitation.

SAIL Employees Sweep PM's Shram Awards

The Prime Minister's Shram Awards for the Performance Year 2018 were announced on 12th August, and the employees of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) swept away almost half of the awards. Out of the total 69 awardees, 31 awardees have been chosen from SAIL for their exemplary workmanship, innovativeness, and dedication to the duty.

This is the highest number of PM's Shram awards won by the employees of any organization during the year. Six employees of SAIL have won ShramBhushan and six ShramVir/Veerangana (all from Rourkela) and nineteen employees have bagged the Shram Shree/Devi awards.

What is more worth mentioning here is that out of 31 SAIL awardees fifteen employees are from Rourkela Steel Plant

The ShramBhushan award carries a cash award of Rs. 2 lakh while ShramVir/Veerangana and Shram Shree Awards carry cash awards of rupees sixty thousand and forty thousand respectively.

Congratulating the winners, Smt Soma Mondal, Chairman, SAIL said, "SAIL employees have always made their mark with their skill, ingenuity, and dedication. Shram Awards being one of the most respectable awards conferred upon workmen by the Government of India, our employees have once again made all of



us proud with our achievements. Winning such awards shall enthuse the collective to contribute even higher".

A team of 6 employees from Hot Strip Mill of RSP has bagged the 'ShramBhushan' Award. While another team of 6 employees also from RSP's Plate Mill has bagged the 'ShramVir' Award. A team of 3 employees from the Pipe Plants has won Shram Shree Award. RSP has so far received 37 Awards comprising 120 employees in the different categories of the Prestigious Award.

The recipients of ShramBhushan are DevrajSarangi, Gopal Krishna Sahu, and Ranjan Kumar Das, all Senior Technicians, Tapas Kumar Jena, Subrat Kumar Jena, and Prafulla Kumar Patra, all Assistant Rollers.

The recipients of Shram Shree Award are Manoj Kumar Pradhan, Senior Technician, Badal Kumar Kar, Senior Technician/ Operator, and Sujit Kumar Mishra, Senior Technician / Operator. The Award winners of ShramVir are Sangram Kishore Swain, Assistant Roller, Chandan Kumar Mazumdar, and Pravas Chandra Behera, both Senior Technician, Raghunath Prasad Padhi, Assistant Roller, Susanta Kumar Mishra, Assistant Roller, and Ms. Chari Oram, Senior Semi-Skilled Worker. Rourkela Steel Plant organized a function to felicitate the shram veer awards winners on 13th August'21 at the Manthan Conference Hall. Amanda Prakash, Director In Charge (DIC), BSL, and RSP while felicitating and congratulating the recipients of the prestigious award said, "Recognitions like the coveted Prime Minister's Shram Awards come with years of hard work and commitment. It's a proud moment for all of us at RSP."

Free Digital Diagnostic Scheme Launched in Sundargarh District

Sundargarh: The Sundargarh district administration has introduced three public welfare programs, including free digital diagnostics, with a focus on the rural population. Collector Nikhil PawanKalyan launched the programs on the occasion of Independence Day at VikashBhawan in Sundargarh. The new initiatives include 'e-SWASTHYA' to provide comprehensive health check-ups free to the urban and rural population. Lab-in-the-Bag', an advanced mobile lab facility introduced under this program, would be available at 12 CHCs across the district. Moreover, sample collection points are set up in various locations of the district to connect

people with the services. In these centers the beneficiaries can have over 76 types of test reports from a single sample including records of vitals. Similarly, block-level Integrated Physiotherapy and Therapeutics Unit for various modern therapies and Safety Kit for protection and well being of workers were introduced. With the implementation of the Integrated Physiotherapy & Therapeutics Unit, rural people from over 150 villages across 11 blocks will be benefited from this free service. Sundargarh District Administration will provide a special kit to protect workers of mines, factories, construction, and other sectors. The Kit containing shoes and socks,

goggles, helmet, hand gloves, gumboots, special mask to protect from dust, safety harness, jacket, first-aid kits, raincoat, and other essential equipment will be given to workers under the launched scheme. In the first phase, more than 15,000 beneficiaries will be provided with these safety kits. The Collector also lauded the completion of one year of a special nutrition program for children. Under this scheme, RagiLaddu mix and Spirulina-fortified Chiki and Sugar are distributed to children through Anganwadicenters. The special nutrition program covering Spirulina fortified Sugar and Chikki and RagiLaddu for Children in Sundargarh have completed one year. the initiative

benefits one lakh forty-two thousand children with Spirulina distribution. Similarly, over sixty-three thousand children are being nourished by RagiLaddu mix distribution. It has helped to prevent malnutrition among children and bring overall growth to them. The initiatives are supported by District Mineral Foundation (DMF).

While launching the initiatives

the Collector said, "physiotherapy services will be immensely useful to the people of Sundargarh. We have started these new initiatives to provide various health facilities free of cost to the people at rural areas through the CHCs/PHCs".

AshwiniVaishnav's visit kindles hope for long pending Therubali-Gunupur railway line

Raygada, Aug 20: (Jogeswar Das) According to emancipated local gentries of Raygada, political representatives raise the long-standing issue of the Therubali-Gunupur railway line once in a while and seem to compete with each other for self-projection. Healthy competition would have witnessed a scorecard with a high percentage; but non-fulfillment of the public demand for this railway line since last fifty years has put the political will of all the ruling parties, be that in center or state, a big question mark and blatant betrayal. All of them shed crocodile tears when the demand by the civil societies crops up. The first-ever visit to Odisha and Raygada last Friday by Vaishnav since taking over as Minister of Railways, Electronics & IT has kindled a ray of hope among Raygada denizens. Civil societies



like Lions Clubs, Walkers Clubs, Merchant associations, and various other fraternities including media have felicitated the minister and raised issues of Therubali-Gunupur railway line, initiating actual work of rail division at Raygada, miserable mobile network in all parts of the district including the district headquarters. Vaishnav responded to all the memoranda received from the non-state institutions by saying that ModiGovt had entrusted seven departments to Odisha like railways, electronics, IT, tribal

affairs, education, skill development & Jalshakti by creating history. His govt is committed to pushing a comprehensive development package in the eastern region of the country. He assured the public and press to accelerate the issues raised through memoranda submitted by civil society organizations.

"Despite internal issues & agreements between Govt of Odisha and GOI, the survey had already been done with the allocation of finance by GOI at several points of time for implementation of

the project. Though this will pave the way for the economic progress of this tribal region, no work has been started. In the plea of "cost-benefit analysis", we were put for an indefinite wait for the last fifty years. We request you to put an immediate end to this impasse and implement the project at your earliest possible", said Sri RanjanRath, a senior scribe of the district. "It is really unfortunate that even Group-D examination is conducted nationwide. We request you to promulgate a policy in which this examination

is held Division wise with proportionate reservation mainly to create opportunities for ST/SC and other poor youths of this tribal region, which constitute more than 70% of the total population of KBK. One mega-production unit must be set up in KBK to create employment opportunities and counter regional imbalance", said SmtBidulataHuika, State Convenor of OdishaAdibasiManch.

Sri Rabindra Patakhandal, State Convenor of Odisha Suchana Adhikar Manch said, "Mobile network is still inaccessible in more than 70% villages of Raygada. In few villages, tribal children climb hills and trees to access the network. A tribe child died two days back of landslide while he was going to his hut on hills to access network. Even in district headquarters, the network is miserable. We request you

to look into the matter on a priority basis."

Vaishnav, a combination of technocrat-corporate-administrative-political leadership, reached by Hirakhand train in 3rd without much fanfare after which he went in a roadshow with the party cavalcade for the darshan of local deity MaaMajhighariani. Then he interacted with a few beneficiaries of Ujjwala& PMAY central schemes. The public and press meet for this Jan AshirwadYatra(People's Blessings March) were addressed by Vaishnav in the conference hall of Sai International Hotel. Sri Siba Pattanaik, Sri KaliramMajhi, Sri Brugu Boxipatra, Sri Golak Nayak, Sri Basanta Ulaka, Sri Shyam Das, Sri Kishore Panda, Sri Jayarama Pangi, Sri Tutu Das, Sri Bidyadhar Panda, Advocate Venkat Rao Senapati, Smt. Ranjana Pandey were on the dais.

CINI organises COVID aid camp



RAYAGADA, Aug 21: (Jogeswar Das) An inaugural ceremony was organized by Child in Institute (CINI) in partnership with CSR IndusInd bank Ltd at Khambesi PHC

under Bissamcuttack Block with support of the Raygada administration. Sri TukuBarik, PA, ITDA Raygada district inaugurated the COVID SahayataKendras (CSK or

COVID Help desks)with flagging off the mobile awareness vehicle in presence of Dr. AnsupravaChoudhury, Medical Officer, Community Health Centre (CHC)

Bissamcuttack, CDPO, Smt. SusilaSabar and Medical officer In-charge Khambesi PHC, Dr. UnnatiRana. Sri. T. Barik, Dr. A. Choudhury, local tribal leader JituJakesika and SarpanchDrinJaJakesika also distributed wellness, hygiene, and kitchen garden kits to the invited families and frontline workers during the inaugural function of CSK at Khambesi PHC.

Child in Institute (CINI) in partnership with CSR IndusInd bank Ltd, through its COVID response, will reach out to the underprivileged and vulnerable people in hard-to-reach areas of the Bissamcuttack block of Raygada district with the support of district administration. COVID SahayataKendras

(CSK or COVID Help desks) at the PHC level along with a mobile awareness vehicle is being set up for awareness generation in the community on COVID appropriate behaviors and mobilizing communities for vaccination. There will be an intensive drive for community campaign with the engagement of ICDS and Health frontline workers with the support of PRIs and SHGs for promotion of COVID appropriate behaviors and vaccination drive. The hygiene kits will also be provided to the frontline workers of the Bissamcuttack block for safety measures and preventive care. Following the intensive intervention of CSK, a three years project for "Doorstep care program for maternal, child, and adolescent health, nutrition and

NCDs for SC-ST population with special focus on PVTGs" will be implemented in Bissamcuttack block with a scale-up plan in other PVTG blocks of Raygada district.

Child in Need Institute (CINI) is a leading Indian NGO established in 1974, working across West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Assam in the eastern region of India that has adopted human rights-based programming with children and adolescents to foster human and social development. Over nearly five decades, CINI has been engaged in participatory, convergent, and preventive rights-based programming for women, children, and adolescents in the areas of health, nutrition, education, and protection reaching out to 7 million people.

MPC college building needs of renovation

Baripada, 28 August: The century-old Bhanja Palace, that houses Maharaja Purnachandra Junior College needs immediate renovation as many parts of the building have become unsafe. However, the report 2019 of the Department of Road and Building under the Public Work Department (PWD) revealed that several rooms of the Royal Palace are unusable and unsafe. Since then no step has been taken to repair the building. The classrooms like Zoology, Statistics, Physics, Store Room, Lecture waiting room, boys' hostel, and rooms No-51, 56, and 57 are completely

unsafe. The Century-old building is situated in the heart of the Baripada town and closes to the Grand Road.

The students are unhappy to take their classes inside the unsafe rooms of the building as rainwater is leaking in most interior parts and roofs of the building.

The principal of the College Subhankar Sahoo said that he informed the Higher Education Department regarding the dilapidated condition of the classrooms of the building and requested to take urgent steps in 2019.

Over two years have passed, neither the con-

cerned department nor the department of Higher Education are not taking any follow-up over the restoration of the classrooms of the building while more than 2,100 students are reading in different streams, said official sources. Contacted, Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj said that he will order the Executive Engineer of PWD to inquire into the matter and immediate repair of the building as soon as possible. He said there is a plan to make a separate building for the function of the college, which is in the pipeline.

Construction of the



century-old palace, which looks like the famous Buckingham Palace of London, began in 1804 under the direction of Maharani Sumitra Devi BhanjDeo and it got its aura of majesty during the rule of Maharaja Krushna Chandra

BhanjDeo (1868-1882). Home to six generations of rulers of the Bhanj dynasty till 1956, Maharaja Pratap Chandra BhanjDeo, the last ruler, sold the palace along with the bathing ghat at a throw-away price of Rs 4.75 lakh in 1956, to the

State Government. The walls of the royal bathing place which were covered with mirrors have been converted into a library-cum-reading room for Maharaja Purna Chandra (MPC) Junior College that was shifted to the palace in 1960.

Trees in one acre of a reserve forest fell under the nose forest administration



Baripada, 28 August: While the Government is taking the effort to conserve forest by allocating a core of funds, the forest department of Mayurbhanj district has a blind eye towards its primary obligations. The forest is hardly 10 km away from the Baripada range office. A large number of sal trees were cut down by a timber mafia with help of local tribes. However, the sal trees were falling more

than an acre of the forest to create a space for making it a football playground. Vanoo Mitra Acharya said that the drive was started more than four days and the timbers were sold by the mafia. He also took some photographs of felling trees.

Environmentalists here questioned that despite the forest being situated around 10 km far from the range office and 12 km from the DFO of-

fice and members of Vana Suraksha Samiti were serving their duties how it was possible for felling of huge quantities of sal trees in a reserve forest in the locality.

Local tribals said that some local tribals were cutting down sal trees inside the Ahari reserved forest after being inspired by a timber smuggler. "We do not want to clear the forest but it has

life risk if we should raise the forest as the forest department and the mafias were involved in the practice," said some local tribals near the forest location.

If a ranger officer was involved in the racket and earned money from mafias and misused his duty, the authority should conduct a high-level inquiry and take stern action against the range officer, demanded environmentalist Vanoo Mitra Acharya. Regional Chief Conservator of Forest (RCCF) Yoga Jayanand said that he will ask the Baripada DFO to immediately visit the spot. When contacted, LD Behera, the range officer of Baripada admitted that such an incident had occurred. He assured the media that he will visit the reserve forest on Thursday. The timber will be seized if it is necessary, he said.

District Headquarters Hospital to set up a standard post-mortem centre soon

Baripada, 28 August:- With a minimum facility to give respect to claimed and unclaimed bodies, the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district is planning to set up a standardizable post mortem center very soon. The cost of the project has been estimated at around Rs.10 lakh under Nation Health Mission (NHM).

Assistant Engineer of district headquarters hospital Basanta Kumar Raj said that a separate building was already constructed in the backside of the hospital to make the postmortem center as standard-able. The electric supply, water, and other adequate requirements will be completed within a month besides the installation of cooling machines needed to preserve dead bodies. The NHM had provided Rs.10 lakh for the building construction.

Hospital Superintendent BN Mohapatra said that machinery equipment had already been procured but it is yet to be installed due to an incomplete building. The existing postmortem center will be demolished and a Liquid Oxygen Plant will be set up at that place. The district headquarters hospital is upgrading to a medical college and hospital in name of Pandit Raghunath Murmu from 7 September 2017.

Poor has no caste



Sirish C. Mohanty

The BijuJanata Dal's newfound enthusiasm and demand for a caste-based census followed up with the announcement that the party will provide tickets to 27 percent OBC candidates in the ensuing panchayat elections is diametrically opposite to the avowed principles and philosophy of late BijuPatnaik after whom the party has been named and continues to dwell in the hearts of Odias.

At the peak of the Mandal Commission report-related controversy in the nineties, BijuPatnaik had vehemently opposed the report and even vented his anger at party (the then Janata Dal) meetings. The poor have no caste, he had pronounced while adding that the 'Mandal brigade' will be countered by the 'Kamandal Brigade', (implicitly referring to the BJP), and the disruption could cost the government at the center. He and a few of the senior colleagues had detested the move of the VP Singh government pointing out that Odisha like few other eastern India states -West Bengal, Assam has historically been

above caste and religion-based politics.

Odisha was in flames during the anti-Mandal agitation with firebrand student Congress leader late Lulu Mahapatra putting the BijuPatnaik government in deep trouble. The government of the day tried to douse the flames by booking Mahapatra under NSA. At his heart, BijuPatnaik, the tall secular democrat that he was, had always despised caste and religion-based politics.

Competitive politics or populism at the expense of the socioeconomic and cultural fabric of Odisha is going to be destructive, lamented a former ministerial colleague of BijuPatnaik while regretting that the BJD was getting unnecessarily drawn into such a brand of politics. Affirmative action purely on economic criteria is what is required, he added.

The BijuJanata Dal led by Naveen Patnaik was formed to 'fulfill the dreams of BijuPatnaik'.

The legendary leader had promoted and pioneered empowerment and reservation for women. To that extent, CM

Naveen Patnaik has also taken the lead. Recently, BJD Ministers said pending central legislation, CM Naveen Patnaik had allotted 33 percent seats to women in the parliament election and again he has shown the way by promising a 27 percent quota of seats to OBC in the next panchayat elections in Odisha.

It was a fact that Odisha's then Government had opposed the Mandal Commission recommendations by all means. Already there has been horizontal reservation for women and vertical reservation for SCs, STs, and BCs provided under the Constitution. Now EWS, another category has been added to cover the non-SC, ST, and OBCs. The Odisha Reservation of Posts and Services (socially and educationally backward classes) Act 2008 has not been implemented. The Government of Odisha has made legislation for 27 percent reservation in job and educational institutions but later reduced it to 11.25 percent because of the compulsion of 50 percent criteria imposed by the Supreme Court.

The 127th Constitution Amendment Bill, 2021, to give

power to the State and Union Territories to enlist and maintain their SEBC list, has been passed by both Houses of Parliament with extensive debate and support of all parties. This was required to reverse a recent Supreme Court judgment based on the 102 Constitutional amendments of 2018 that set a limit to reservations to a maximum of 50 percent. There was a need to amend Article 342A and substantial amendment in Article 338B and 366 of the Constitution to restore the power of the State in line with federal structure and bring more clarity over the issues of OBC list preparation.

The move is more a correction than any bold step towards heralding any change in the real issues. The real issues of OBC reservation confronting many States such as Odisha are 50 percent cap over the reservation and get a correct figure of the OBC population and their socio-economic condition to ensure social justice for almost nearly half of the population. There has been a demand by major parties to disclose the SECC -2011 data or go for a detailed caste census in 2021 along with a repeal of 50 percent cap over reservation to move further by allowing States to make arrangements of reservation as per their social demography.

There are 2,479 castes, sub-castes, and communities in India who have been notified as Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the Central list of the country. They are historically denied a fair representation in governance

and remain disproportionately underrepresented in public sector jobs and education.

The National Sample Survey in its 61st round in 2005 on employment and unemployment situation among social groups in India estimated the OBC to be 41 percent of the country's population. The socio-economic and caste census data of 2011 by the Register General of India has to disclose the caste-wise population to know the correct figure. Why the country denied fair participation to almost half of its population is a debatable question.

The princely State of Kolhapur was the pioneer in the introduction of reservation in 1902 for backward and depressed classes currently known as SCs, STs, and OBCs. Later, it was followed by Mysore, Madras in 1921, Bombay presidency in 1931, and Travancore in 1935 followed by Cochin. It was to give a fair share in education and job to the deprived castes.

However, the BJD shouldn't distance from the philosophy of BijuPatnaik who said in the 90s that the poor has no caste. Odisha has been well above caste-based politics. The political inheritors of the legendary leader should pursue reservation for the economically weaker sections rather than caste-based reservations prevailing in the northern states. While restoring Odisha's pioneering reputation in this regard shouldn't unnecessarily drag it to caste-based conflicting politics.

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151 CBI Cases ...

that the concerned courts dealing with cases investigated by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate shall deal with the cases pending before MPs/MLAs on priority basis and other cases shall be dealt only after the trial in these cases are over," said the report.

The amicus suggested in case, additional courts are required, the high courts and the appropriate government shall constitute additional special courts.

The report further suggested that cases where investigations are pending before the ED and the CBI, a monitoring committee may be constituted comprising of the following: former judge of the top court or the former Chief Justice of a high court, the Director, ED (or his nominee not below the rank of Additional Director), the Director, CBI (or his nominee not below the rank of Additional Director), the Union Home Secretary (or his

nominee not below the rank of Joint Secretary), and a judicial officer not below the rank of district judge to be nominated by the top court.

Amicus suggested the committee may be constituted within a period of two weeks of the order and it should furnish its status report regarding each particular case in a sealed cover to the top court within two months of its first sitting.

On August 10, the top court gave last opportunity to the Centre to

submit a detailed status report regarding details of pendency and stage of trial of cases involving sitting and former lawmakers registered with the central agencies, CBI, and others.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and comprising Justices Vineet Saran and Surya Kant had told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta: "We are reading these reports in newspapers. They don't send us anything. We get everything

in the evening; we don't know anything".

The CJ said in September last year, the court had granted time to Centre to file a detailed status report, then in October, again time was sought, and today, the situation is the same. This does not work, he noted. "What else can we say to express our displeasure, we were told Centre is concerned about pending cases against MPs/MLAs", he had added.

Afghanistan adventure was unnecessary; now it's testing time for India



Sirish C Mohanty

Western involvement in the country was a post-imperial fantasy that has led to the current ghastly situation

reasons never fully explained, Blair declared a "doctrine of international community" and pleaded for Britain to be in the first bombing run over Kabul. He then sent Clare Short as the minister for international development to stop the Afghan's growing poppies. But, Afghan poppy production soared to an all-time high, spreading from six to 28 provinces, probably the most successful farm product of all time. Opium floated the Taliban back to power.

Kabul in 2006, heard nothing but bombast about what already seemed a doomed venture. A British army of 3,400 volunteered to suppress resurgent Taliban rebels in Helmand. The defence secretary John Reid promised that only "remnants" of the Taliban remained and that "not a shot needed firing". Seven-year later, British troops left defeated and the Americans took over before also being defeated. The local Pashtun are masters at humiliating outside powers.

From then on, the retreat was only a matter of time. What is happening now is ghastly. Twenty years of dependency on lavish western taxpayers means that soldiers, interpreters, journalists, academics, and aid workers are seeing friends threatened and killed. Years of assistance and training are at risk. A reputed trillion dollars of American money

has been wasted.

Like the West, India has also developed an interest in Afghan affairs because of geopolitical reasons. To reduce landlocked Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan, India ventured the Chabahar port and railway connectivity to Afghanistan through Iran but in vain.

The Taliban's rout is likely to cause a significant shift in the geopolitics of South Asia, and it could be particularly testing for India, given the country's historically tense relations and border disputes with Pakistan and China - both are expected to play a crucial role in Afghanistan's future.

Pakistan shares a porous border with Afghanistan and has long been an active player in its northern neighbor's affairs. Now China is showing an interest in playing a bigger role in Afghanistan. Foreign minister Wang Yi's meeting with senior Taliban leaders last month shows Beijing doesn't want to be a silent player anymore.

Afghanistan was a loose alliance between the democratic government in Kabul, the West, and other democracies like India. But the world is likely to see Pakistan, Russia, Iran, and China coming together to play the next chapter of the Great Game. Some in India see this as a loss for Delhi and a big win for Pakistan. But that was too simplistic a view because the

Pashtun-led Taliban has never recognized the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, creating discomfort for Islamabad.

But it's also true that the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan gives Pakistan strategic depth against India. "Pakistani officials may show this off as India's loss, but then there are bigger strategic goals for Pakistan. It sees itself as the biggest regional winner at the moment.

Experts say Pakistan was not happy with the growing ties between the US and India, or former Afghan president Ashraf Ghani's lukewarm relations with Islamabad. The country's struggling economy also made it feel vulnerable. Now Islamabad has reasons to believe that it's the winner because its "all-weather" friendship with China will be useful in Afghanistan. Moreover, Beijing is not shy of showing its might anymore. China can and will play the game now according to its own rules.

China also has economic interests in Afghanistan, which can help fulfill its ever-growing need for minerals, but more importantly, it can pressure the Taliban to ban the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which it blames for unrest in its Muslim-dominated Xinjiang province, to operate on Afghan soil. China and Pakistan "would ride piggyback on each other in

Afghanistan". But Beijing should be cautious and not fall into any trap like other world powers in the past.

Russia and Iran also seem to be on the same trajectory - neither has evacuated its embassy, and both nations' diplomats are still working in Kabul.

So, what can India do now? The country was never as big a player in Afghanistan as Pakistan, the US, or Russia. But Delhi has always been involved in promoting security and cultural ties. Thousands of Afghans are in India for education, work, or medical treatment.

The biggest challenge India will face is whether to recognize the Taliban government or not. The decision will get tough, especially if Moscow and Beijing decide to acknowledge the Taliban government in some form. Experts say Islamabad is likely to officially accept the Taliban government, as it did in 1999.

India's best option at the moment seems to keep a channel of communication open with the Taliban. But it will be an uneasy relationship, considering the history between the Taliban and Delhi. The Taliban gave a safe passage to the hijackers of an Indian Airlines plane in 1999 - an incident that remains etched in the collective memory of Indians. And Delhi has always kept close ties with the Northern Alliance - a

group of Afghan warlords that fought the Taliban between 1996 and 1999.

With the Taliban in the heart of Kabul, India may now wish to put the past to one side to safeguard its interests and to ensure the region remains stable. There are concerns that militant groups like the Jaish-e-Mohammad Lashkar-e-Taiba will be galvanized by the Taliban's success and plan and execute attacks against India.

It's a diplomatic tightrope India will have to walk. And it may need a strategy to ensure that the contested region of Kashmir doesn't become the next rallying point for the mujahedeen.

Experts say India needs to keep talking to the Taliban; it will have to decide how much it may want to get involved in any anti-Taliban groupings. The West is likely to form a united front to keep pressure on the Taliban. British PM Boris Johnson has already called for a joint response to the Taliban government.

Then there are other possibilities, like the Northern Alliance regrouping later, or Afghanistan becoming another place for a fight for supremacy between the US-led West and a joint group of China, Russia, and Pakistan. So there are no easy options for India, but its decisions will have consequences on regional peace and global geopolitics.

Odisha No. 2 In Jumbo Electrocution Deaths, 70% Are Traps By Poachers

70% electrocution deaths are traps by poachers

As per the Wildlife Protection Society of India's (WPSI) wildlife crime database, the illegal ivory trade is rampant in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Angul and Sambalpur. And if the State government data is analysed, the fact of coincidence is poaching of elephants are highest in the same region.

In a span of the last six months, nearly a dozen jumbos were shocked to death in Odisha. Since the last decade, the State still holds on to the dubious distinction of number two nationally in losing hordes of the large mammal to live electric wires.

Be it poaching or shocking of the pachyderms to deaths, Odisha figures at number two position in the country. And this is definitely the elephant in the room moment for the State Environment and Forest Department. Because, despite claims of the stringent action plan, the writ of poachers runs large in the State, and they kill wild animals at their will.

As per data available with

the Union Environment Ministry, among 12 states home to elephants in the country, excluding Meghalaya, it's only Odisha that has been reporting pachyderm deaths due to poaching for the last three consecutive years.

Mammoth Crisis

When the State is home to only 1,976 jumbos, it has lost nearly 1500 during the last two decades (2000-21) and 99 per cent of deaths were of unnatural causes (means not natural death).

In the given backdrop, as per an estimate, a cow elephant during her reproductive years of around 4-decades could give birth to 6 calves. But Odisha is losing the big mammal at a rate of 75 per year, the data of Odisha Forest Department for the last 2-decades reveal. The high casualty, therefore, points to the existential crisis the pachyderms in the State are staring at.

Killer Factor

Electrocution has emerged as one of the top

killers of the big mammal in the State. The data with the Odisha Forest and Environment Department shows that a high of 139 elephants has been shocked to death during the period 2009-2021.

During the period 2014-2020, as per Union Environment Ministry data, with a total of 73 elephants succumbing to live wires in the State, Odisha figures at number two in the country. Assam, which has an elephant population of 5719, topped the list with 90 electrocution deaths during the period.

Similarly, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which have jumbo population of 6049, 5706 and 2761, respectively, saw deaths due to electrocution at 65, 24 and 68, respectively.

The above comparison shows despite having less elephant population, electrocution deaths in Odisha are on the higher side.

As per Odisha Forest Minister's data laid in State Assembly, the majority of

the jumbo electrocution deaths have been attributed to live electric wire traps set up by poachers, though nearly 25-30 per cent deaths were also blamed on the discoms as the high voltage sagging wires form the death noose around the neck of the big mammal here.

The data with the Odisha government reveals the killer zones. Keonjhar, Angul, Dhenkanal and Sambalpur bearing the maximum burden of jumbo electrocution deaths in the State.

As per the Wildlife Protection Society of India's (WPSI) wildlife crime database, the illegal ivory trade is rampant in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Angul and Sambalpur. And if the State government data is analysed, the fact of coincidence is poaching of elephants are highest in the same region.

Experts Furious At OdishaGovt

The death of a 10-year-old male elephant electrocuted by a live wire trap laid



by poachers inside the Angul forest division this July, which hogged the headlines as Odisha by then had recorded around 4 jumbo deaths due to electrocution in a span of little over a month, expressing disgust, Sangitalyer, founder of Voice for Asian Elephants Society (VFAES) shot a letter to State's Energy Minister, Dibya Shankar Mishra in that regard. She said, "The recent spate of elephant deaths in Odisha due to electrocution is a matter of deep concern. The elephants were electrocuted within a span of just 34 days. It is a heinous crime against nature, and the voiceless gentle giants of our

planet who continue to suffer and die silently due to human ignorance and arrogance, exacerbated by apathy, complacency, negligence and a lack of reverence for the natural world that sustains all of humanity."

Strongly disapproving of the jumbo state of affairs in the State, President, Wildlife Society of Odisha, Biswajit Mohanty said, "While determined gangs of elephant poachers chase tuskers in Odisha's forests for ivory, the pachyderms are also falling victim to careless power companies. But a clueless State Government has turned into a mute spectator,"

World Odisha Society hosts online Midnight Freedom Festival

Cuttack, August 16: (Kishore Dwibedi) Odisha played a vital role in the Indian freedom struggle, described by distinguished speakers. Participating in the online midnight International Freedom Festival hosted by World Odisha Society (WOS), the honored guests and leaders of OdiaSamaj of various countries unanimously eulogized the significant contribution of Odisha during the freedom movement and building modern Indian Nation after independence. Entitled the 'Valiant Paika's Version of Valour', the eight hours long Mega Celebration was inaugurated by the

Speaker of Odisha Assembly Dr. Surjya Narayan Patro. Addressing the gathering through video Conferencing Dr. Patro underlined that the worldwide Odia and Indian Diaspora have always been emotionally attached to their Place of Birth. Dr. Patro sought the help, Cooperation, and Support of NRIs and NROs in the process of building a vibrant Odisha and super powerful India. Presiding over the webinar Chairman of World Odisha Society Kishore Dwibedi pointed that the sole goal of WOS is to establish the excellence of Odisha in the World arena.

Speaking in the virtual

session the Guest of Honour Former Union Minister and son of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, Sunil Shastri hailed the exceptional merit and outstanding talent shown by Odias in various fields branding them as jewels of the nation. Endorsing the Paika Mutiny as the First War of Independence of the country, Shri Shastri elaborated on the exemplary contribution of Odisha in enhancing the glory of the Country.

The senior member of WOS Akshay Mohanty presented a welcome address in the midnight session. President of Australia Odias Asso-

ciation Dr. Nalini Pati, General Secretary of Odisha Association of UK Siba Ranjan Biswal, Prem Nepak from New Zealand, Dr. Sitansu Sekhar Nanda from South Korea, Subas Sahoo from Bahrain, Durga Madhab Mishra, and Hrushikesh Patra from Bhubaneswar participated in the marathon brainstorming deliberation.

Founder of Mahakankhya Foundation Pushpanjali Barik conducted and coordinated the entire program nicely and lucidly. Nandan Dwibedi ably managed the Digital Control Room.

Prominent personalities present during the occasion

include Director of Indian Metrological Department Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Former MP Pradeep Majhi, Former Minister Judhistira Jena, Editor of Shree Sahitya Krushna Nayak, President of Odisha Samaj UAE Amiya Mishra, General Secretary Pritish Dash, President of Odia Samaj of Netherlands Saswat Padhi, Debadatta Behera and Surjya Mohapatra from USA, Debasis Sri chandan from Italy, Debarshi Mallick from Indonesia, Sukant Sahu from London, Prashant Bhuyan from Canada, Nihar Samantara, Khirod Jena, Krupanidhi Biswal, Dr

Archana Barik, Raj laxmi Patra, Pitambar & Ahalaya Barik, Barada Prasanna Das, Pritam Nayak, Sohini Chakraborty, Sarita Mishra, Adyasha Das, Dr. Rabinarayan Behera, Arupa Das, Mansi Mishra, Pramod Sutar, Lalit Pattnaik, Sujata Choudhury, Ramakant Mohapatra, Lipsa Mohanty, Dr. Ashok Choudhury, Dr. Akshay kumar Nayak, Sarada Prasad Mohapatra, Lalit kumar Pradhan, Manoj Nayak, Subodh Narayan Padhi, Akshay Samal, Dr. Manoj Panigrahi, Sanjib Mohanty of FICCI and Dr. Laxminarayan Padhi.

Union Railway, Education Ministers Begin Jan Ashirwad Yatra In Odisha

Jan Ashirwad Yatra, a pan-India programme has been launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi



Bhubaneswar, Aug 19: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the Minister of Railways, Ashwini

Vaishnaw kicked off BJP's Jan Ashirwad Yatra in Odisha on Thursday. The Jan Ashirwad Yatra, a pan-In-

dia program, has been launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to introduce the new Central ministers to the people.

As many as 31 newly inducted ministers in the Union Cabinet are taking part in the 142-day long outreach program organized by the ruling party at the Centre.


The ministers have been asked to tour their respective states and constituencies and reach out to the masses to create awareness on the various welfare schemes of the Central government and also seek blessings from the public.

As per the itinerary in Odisha, the two ministers, Dharmendra Pradhan and Ashwini Vaishnaw, will

embark on the tour program for three days till August 22 during which they are scheduled to travel a distance of around 419 kilometers across the State. As per last reports, the Union ministers have traveled to Puri after landing at Bhubaneswar airport. They will pay obeisance to Lord Jagannath at Puri Srimandir during their halt at the pilgrim town.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan is slated to attend various programs in Cuttack and Khordha districts. Similarly, Railway Minister

Ashwini Vaishnaw will travel to Rayagada by train today evening. He will halt at Koraput on August 20 and attend the program in Jeypore the next day. Thereafter, he will continue the Yatra through Nabarangpur, Kesinga, Titlagarh, Kantabanji, and Patnagarh before concluding his tour with a program in Bolangir on August 22.

Both the ministers are scheduled to attend as many as 115 events in six Lok Sabha constituencies under seven districts of the State during the three-day program. 

UP's Sultanpur district may soon be renamed after Lord Ram's son


After changing the name of Faizabad district to Ayodhya, its neighbouring Sultanpur district may soon be known as "Kush Bhawanpur" after Lord Ram's son Kush.

Sources said a proposal for renaming had been sent to the state government by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Revenue and was likely to be taken up in the next Cabinet meeting for approval.

Citing historical records in the district gazetteer, the Sultanpur district administration in a report said the city was known as "Kush Bhawanpur" in 1300 and was governed by the Bhar dynasty until it was invaded by Alauddin Khalji's army, and was later renamed "Sultanpur".

Sultanpur District Magistrate Raveesh Gupta said, "A few months ago when we looked into the records based on the district gazetteer, it was found that around 1300 during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, the city was razed by his army and has since then been known as Sultanpur. We had submitted these findings to the government a few months ago."

The government in 2018 had decided that Faizabad should be known as Ayodhya.

On December 21, 2018, the issue of Sultanpur was raised by BJP MLA from Lambhua Deomani Dwivedi in the Assembly. He had claimed that he found some historical records showing that the city was known under different names associated with Kush and demanded that the House unanimously clear the name "Kush Bhawanpur". 

Odisha To Become 6th Ageing State By 2031

Come 2031, Odisha will become the sixth state to have a high proportion of elderly population in the country. Moreover, the old-age dependency ratio will post a sharp rise in the State, thereby, propelling it

In contrast, as per the 2011 census, the population of 60+ years male in the State had been 19.94 lakh vis-a-vis 19.90 female populations.

The Grey Area
The concern for the

Odisha Growing Grey!

to emerge as the fourth highest among major states in the country.

Such an outlook about Odisha growing grey in the coming decade has been brought to the fore by the report Elderly in India - 2021.

As per the report, the elderly population (60+) in the State will grow to 71 lakh in 2031 from 39.8 lakh in 2011. The important revelation is 60+ female populations in the State will be more than the males. The projection shows that by 2031, the senior citizens (female) population in the State will be 37.14 lakh as against the male population of 33.86 lakh.

State policymakers is the old-age dependency ratio in the State will rise to 24.8 per cent by 2031 from 15.4 per cent in 2011. The sharp rise in the ratio shows the impact on the working-age group in the State. Since the unemployment rate in Odisha is remaining very high, a sharp rise in the dependency ratio could cast an impact on the social fabric of the State.

Therefore, it becomes imperative for the powers-that-be in the State to create adequate employment opportunities in the State, feel observers.


Sample the Growing Divide. As per the report, in Odisha, as many as 27 per



cent of elderly persons in rural and 31 per cent in urban areas are not dependent on the younger age group.

The shocker is in 2017-18, the proportion shrunk to 26 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively. This shows the deteriorating economic independence of elderly persons in the State. A faster deterioration has been observed in the urban areas. The Health Status. As per the NSSO

2017-18 reports, in Odisha, around 24 per cent in the age group of 60+ years have reported suffering from some illness in the last 15-days.

However, the proportion of 60+ persons treated as an in-patient during the last 1-year is looked into, and then the number is estimated at a high of 84 per cent. This is where the health insurance schemes could play a vital role in the State. 

Minister Narayan Rane, Arrested For 'Slap Thackeray' Remark, Gets Bail



Mumbai, Aug 25: Union Minister Narayan Rane was arrested today over his comment on slapping Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for what he called his "ignorance of the year India won Independence". He was granted bail hours later after he cited his health and argued that he was arrested without proper notice on "politically motivated" charges.

"Satyamev Jayate," Mr Rane tweeted after getting bail.

The Union Minister's lawyer said he will have to appear before the police on August 31 and September 13. The lawyer said if his voice sample is needed for police investigation, a notice will be given seven days in advance. "He has also been told not to do such a thing in future," the lawyer said.

Mr Rane, a BJP leader who joined Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet in July as Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, is the first central minister to be arrested in 20 years.

The minister was arrested while he was having his meal, shortly after the Bombay High

Court rejected his request for an urgent hearing on his petition for protection against action.

Mr Rane's lawyer told the court: "The police have arrived to arrest him; they are waiting at his doorstep." The High Court, asking him to file an application, responded: "Please follow the procedure. Don't make us do the job of the registry."

Narayan Rane is the first Union Minister to be arrested in 20 years. His arrest has become the new flashpoint between allies-turned-rivals Sena and BJP.

The Chief Minister's Shiv Sena had filed several cases against Mr Rane over his remarks on Monday at a "Jan Ashirwad Yatra" organised nationwide by the BJP. He claimed Mr Thackeray forgot the year of independence during his August 15 address and had to check with his aide mid-speech.

"It is shameful that the Chief Minister does not know the year of independence. He leaned back to ask about the count of years of independence during his speech. Had I

been there, I would have given him a tight slap," Mr Rane had said at a public meeting.

The comments sparked Shiv Sena protests and FIRs were filed in three cities listing offences ranging from threatening a public servant to criminal intimidation and breach of peace.

Mr Rane had lashed out at the media for reporting his "imminent arrest",

saying he was no ordinary man. "I haven't committed any crime. You should verify and show it on TV or else I will file a case against you (media). Despite not committing any crime, the media is showing speculative news about my 'imminent' arrest. Do you think I am a normal (ordinary) man?" he had said. The Sena alleged that Mr Rane, a former leader of the party, deliberately made the remarks to provoke tension in Maharashtra. Clashes erupted this morning as Sena members

marching towards Mr Rane's home in Mumbai, carrying flags and shouting slogans, were stopped by BJP workers. Sena workers also targeted BJP offices in cities like Nashik.

The BJP's Devendra Fadnis said he didn't support Mr Rane's comments but compared the police action to the Taliban.

"I want to make it clear that we do not support the comment about the Chief Minister but we will stand by Rane with all our strength. I want to tell the police commissioner that if there is no action against those who attacked our offices then both opposition leaders will sit on dharna at the police commissioner's office. There should be rule of law, not Taliban rule."

Sena MP Vinayak Raut demanded his removal from the central government. "To impress the BJP leadership, Rane has been attacking Shiv Sena and its leaders. He lost his mental balance after his induction into the Modi-led ministry. Modi should show him the door," Mr Raut said.

Clashes between allies-turned-rivals Sena and BJP come months before the February elections to Mumbai's civic body BMC - a high-stakes battle that has amped up politics in Maharashtra.

Mr Rane, 69, began his political career in the Shiv Sena, and then led by Uddhav Thackeray's father Bal Thackeray. He quit the Sena in 2005 over a rift with the Thackerays. After a brief stint in the Congress, he joined the BJP in 2019.

Oppn grouping faces internal challenges

New Delhi, Aug 28: The 19 Opposition parties, which hope to collectively take on Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the next national election, have to settle thorny internal issues before looking at the larger political goals.

To start with, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's demand to set up a core committee, a smaller panel of Opposition leaders, has not found support from all quarters. A section, particularly those in the Left, has argued that it would be difficult to pick and choose 4-5 leaders from a group of 19 parties. Banerjee's logic was that this working group can interact frequently and prepare the groundwork before the top leadership of these 19 parties meets to take decisions. But at least three other leaders saw this proposal of an executive panel as "very difficult" to implement. "Who would be included and who would be kept out? This might create a further divide," said a senior leader who is an active member of the Opposition group. With leadership issues still a potential sore point between the parties; some leaders have already



told Sonia Gandhi to continue to chair this group. "I have requested Sonia ji to continue holding such opposition meetings," Sitaram Yechury said. Yechury's appeal assumes significance as it is widely anticipated that Gandhi, who played a lead role after the 2004 general elections to bring non-NDA parties under the umbrella of the United Progressive Alliance, is set to step down as Congress president in the next organizational election. "Sonia Gandhi is the only leader who commands the respect of each and every opposition party. She has the stature and ability to bring so many divergent political outfits under one umbrella," said a leader from another regional party, who agreed to Yechury's proposal. The next meeting of the opposition group is due in October after their 10 day-long protest programme ends on September 30.

In the first meeting on August 20, Congress president Sonia Gandhi asked India's top opposition leaders to rise above individual compulsions "in the interest of the nation" and start planning "systematically" for the "ultimate goal is the 2024 Lok Sabha elections".

Sonia acknowledged that it would be a "challenge" to keep the group together. She said, "together we can and must rise to it because there is simply no alternative to working cohesively together." "We all have our compulsions, but clearly, a time has come when the interests of our nation demand that we rise above them," said Gandhi, ahead of a daunting task of bringing various regional outfits with conflicting interests to form a grand coalition to take on a formidable Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the next polls.

Govt. pushing a cultural divide through OPELIP

Rayagada, August 24: (Jogeswar Das) Generally Dangaria Kandha community, one of the most underdeveloped Primarily Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) of Odisha, is shy to interact with the Govt personnel and outside world because of the history of injustices meted out to them. Last Saturday, hundreds of DangariaKandhas assembled in Sanadenginali village of Niyamagiri hills range under the leadership of Niyamagiri Surakhya Samiti's(NSS) prominent leader Sri LadaSikaka to resist against Odisha PVTG Empowerment & Livelihood Improvement Programme (OPELIP), which is a flagship program under the Tribal Welfare Deptt of

Govt of Odisha. OPELIP is funded by International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), Rome as a part of UN agencies.

"Around a month back some of us from NSS came to meet the present District Collector Sri Saroj Mishra to appraise him about how OPELIP is disrupting harmony amongst the communities living in Niyamagiri hills, but unfortunately Collector said that he has series of meetings and he could not discuss with them. They felt ashamed and returned", said the youth president of NSS. The predecessors of Mishra called the leaders of the tribal group to the collectorate and interacted with them on their different issues. Even one



Collector went to one of the most interior Tribal villages called Manda to conduct a public hearing. They were even called to events like independence days, rathayatras, etc to integrate them into the mainstream. "It is a matter of great regret that Mishra did not give them time to listen to their grievance. He could have told

them to meet after the meetings if they were so important. Let's not use this PVTG member as showpieces", rued Sri Rabindra Patakhandal, State Convenor of Odisha Suchana Adhikar Mancha.

The members of NSS are anguished over the implementation of OPELIP, which boasts of spending

cores for their development. A minuscule amount reaches the tribals. As it exclusively works for the PVTG, no assistance is provided to under privileged communities like SCs and OBCs. According to the leaders assembled, Govt is consciously creating a cultural divide and disharmony among the

communities inhabiting on 112 villages of Niyamagiri hills for centuries. As the collector did not listen to them when they approached him in the district headquarters on the plea of the paucity of time, they have decided to call the Collector, Sub-Collector and other senior Govt officials to their village to resolve on this issue or otherwise they will be compelled to lock the OPELIP office, warned Lada.

It is high time that Mishra & his senior colleagues pay a patient hearing to the still shy DangariaKandha and other communities of Niyamagiri to avoid a law & order situation in the area.

From Page-1

Modi Govt's...

Under the Rs 6 lakh crore-National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), announced by Finance Minister NirmalaSitharaman, the Centre said the indicative monetisation value of these two national stadiums and two regional centres in FY 22-25 will be Rs 11,450 crore.

Road Asset Monetisation

Road assets worth Rs 1.60 lakh crore will be monetised over four years till FY25 under the ambitious national asset monetisation plan. the road assets considered for monetisation during FY 2022 to FY 2025 aggregate to 26,700 km.

Real Estate Asset Monetisation

The Centre plans to monetise real estate assets worth an estimated Rs 15,000 crore, including several housing colonies in the national capital and eight ITDC hotels, under the National Monetisation Pipeline. As per the document prepared by NitiAayog, the urban real estate assets have monetisation potential of around Rs 15,000 crore during the financial years 2022-25.

Shipping Asset Monetisation

Shipping assets worth Rs 12,828 crore will be monetised over the next four years under the Rs 6 lakh crore National Monetisation Pipeline.

Mining Assets Monetisation

The government has identified 160 coal mining assets worth an estimated at Rs 28,747 crore for monetisation over four

years till FY25.

Power Asset Monetisation

Government's think tank NITI Aayog has valued state-owned power generation assets at Rs 39,832 crore which can be monetised by the financial year 2025.

Ware housing Monetisation

The Centre plans to monetise warehousing assets owned by state-owned firms FCI and CWC over the next four years for an estimated Rs 28,900 crore under the National Monetisation Pipeline.

Taliban Says India...

over the past 20 years - from roads, dams to even the parliament building - and if the hardliners had stopped bilateral trade, Shaheen said the projects for the benefit of Afghans must be completed if under construction. "About their (India's) projects which are good for the people of Afghanistan and which contribute to the welfare of people of Afghanistan, if they are incomplete then they can complete it. What we were opposing was their siding with the former government.

"What we have wanted for the last 20 years is that countries, including India, should have a relation with the people of Afghanistan. And they should also acknowledge the intention of the people of Afghanistan for the liberation of the country. It was our point and our position and we have always said that no one should not side with that puppet government. They should support the people of Afghanistan," the spokesperson said.

6 Families In Khordha Living In Deep Forest Fearing Brutality

Khordha, Aug 30: Days after a disturbing video purportedly showing members of the so-called 'Humanitarian Organisation' brutally lynching a father-son duo in Khordha district of Odisha went viral on social media triggering massive outcry, it is now alleged that as many as six families are living in deep forest fearing the brutality of the outfit's Chief Manas Das.

A family living in 'AdivasiSahi' under Sadar Police Station limit in Khordha alleged that around eight years ago they were forced to leave their village after they were brutally beaten up by the members of the organisation. They claimed to have been living in the forest since then.

Besides, they alleged that some of their family members were falsely implicated in a murder case by the organisation in 2014 and sent to jail. Later, the outfit's members also allegedly plundered their house. Since then, the six families, who left the village, have been living in a nearby forest. They have also accused Das of encouraging people to carry out such brutality against them. "Followers of Manas Das



thrashed me and sent my husband and sons to jail even though they were not involved in any crime. I didn't have anything to eat or clothes to wear. I was beaten up and thrown away from my house by his (Das) people," alleged a woman.

Another woman alleged that her husband was also beaten up by the members of the organisation in a way similar to the father-son duo who are seen thrashed black and blue in the viral video. "They thrashed us similarly and grabbed our house. They also forcibly took away all that we had in the house. We had nothing to eat and nowhere to go. It was Manas Das who encouraged his people to do so,"

she alleged.

The outfit allegedly lures people into joining their fold by promising all types of benefits. However, afterwards, the leaders impose stern rules like prohibiting women from wearing sindoor and bangles, ban on final rites in case of death of elders, and more. And, they will ostracise members who dare violate the norms, and even met out harsh punishment in the form of public flogging.

Earlier, responding to the allegations against him, Das had termed those 'false' and 'baseless'. He claimed a conspiracy has been hatched to defame him ahead of the Panchayat elections in the State.

The best example of a PM and opposition leader



The then Prime Minister NarsimhaRao called Finance Minister Manmohan Singh and asked how much money is there in the treasury, Manmohanji answered that only 9 days we can run the country, that much money is left. On this, NarasimhaRaoji asked how to deal with this

situation? Manmohan Singh said that the value of the country's rupee should have to fall by 20%. NarasimhaRaoji said, okay call the meeting of the cabinet and get approval. Manmohanji got up and started going towards his room. After going a few steps away, he turned back and said

to NarasimhaRao that if the cabinet convenes the meeting, we will not be able to take these tough decisions. All ministers will address the

meeting, then NarasimhaRaoji had said that I had spoken to Atalji and done it.


Means you look at Atalji was more than his cabinet;

India's economy was bankrupt in 1991

vote bank.

NarasimhaRaoji told Manmohanji that right now you go to your room. After 20 minutes, the secretary went to Manmohanji in his room by giving him a letter and in that letter, NarasimhaRaoji had written, done!!

Later, when he asked that what had happened in 20 minutes that you had surprised everyone, including the Cabinet


PM knew that Atalji will speak in the interest of the country. It happens that after the announcement of the Nationalist Opposition and that drastic decision, BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) did not organize a protest movement, but immediately supported the Congress government to bring the country's economy back on track. Gone those Politicians, gone those days... 

Former UP CM, 'Hindu Hriday Samrat' Kalyan Singh passes away



Lucknow, Aug. 21: Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and BJP veteran Kalyan Singh, who was ailing for some time, breathed his last on Saturday night, the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI) said in a statement here. He was 89. Singh was admitted to SGPGI on July 4

in the Intensive Care Unit in critical condition. He died due to sepsis and multi-organ failure, the hospital said in the statement.

Singh was the UP chief minister when the Babri mosque was demolished by a mob in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. He later also served as the governor of Rajasthan. 


American Viewers Swayed by Sanskriti's Odissi Dance

San Francisco, August 26: (Kishore Diwedi) The American Art Lovers have been enthralled by the scintillating and soul-soothing Odissi Dance recital by young and upcoming danseuse SanskritiBebortha recently. Entitled 'Ranga Puja' The maiden stage presence program was held at Cubberley Theatre in Palo Alto of California. Hosted by Jyoti Kala Mandir the solo Odissi Dance Debut performance by Ms.Bebortha was witnessed by hundreds of Odia and Non-Odia Indians and Foreign Spectators. The Audience in the houseful Auditorium was thoroughly moved and completely swayed by the spellbinding presentations of Sanskriti. As per the tradition at the outset, Sanskriti took the blessing of her Guru Odissi Exponent Jyoti Rout. Smt Rout wished her all the best and tied the Ghungaroo in her feet. The Evening's program commenced with the presentation of an invocatory item called Mangalacharan, an obeisance chore to Goddess Saraswati.




The dancing schedule is followed by pure item Mudra Pallavi and Abhinaya items like the essence of Bhagavad Gita - Gita Shara and Nine emotions - Nabarasa. The Epoch-making performance concluded with Mokshya - where the dancer relates her soul being immersed with Supreme Self. Sanskriti's choreography was the manifestation of creative excellence and evoked unusual and overwhelming emotions from the audience. Particularly her electrifying footsteppings during the recital of Mudra Pallavi was having a magnetic and mesmerizing spell on the viewers. Likewise, her outstanding body movements, awesome

facial expressions, expressive eye gestures, and exemplary acting skills were quite visible during the presentations of Gita Shara and Nabarasa items. Sanskriti was greeted with thunderous applause at the end of her each segment of the recital. The entire performance left a lasting impact on the culture connoisseurs of the USA and was much appreciated by the discriminating American dance critics. Sanskriti started learning Odissi Dance from Guru Gayatri Joshi at the early age of four. Later on, she got training about the finest nuances of classical rudiments from Guru Jyoti Rout, Guru Nilanjana Roy, and Guru Keshini Desai. Sanskriti has

been performing extensively in the bay area of San Francisco along with other troupe members of Jyoti Kala Mandir. She had the privilege of participating in the prestigious international Odissi dance Festival at Bhubaneswar in the year 2017. At present, she is pursuing her degree study in Economics as a second-year student at Boston University. Sanskriti's father Dheeren Mohan Bebortha, Mother MonalisaBebortha, Brother SatwikBebortha, and Aunt ShreejaPatnaik played a vital role in organizing the highly successful four hours long 'Ranga Puja' program smoothly and seamlessly. 

86-Year-Old Former Haryana CM Chautala Completed in 2 Hrs His Class 10 Exam in Jail

Sirsa, August 20: INLD Chief and former Haryana Chief Minister, Om PrakashChautala took a Class 10 English exam on Wednesday at AryaKanya Senior Secondary School in Sirsa. 86-Year-Old Former Haryana CM Chautala Prepared for Class 10 Exam in Jail, Appeared & Completed in 2 Hrs

The former Chief Minister passed his Class 10 exam from the National Institute of Open School in 2017, while he was serving a jail sentence ordered by the Supreme Court over his role in a teachers' recruitment scam. Chautala reportedly studied for the latest exam in Tihar Jail in Delhi, where he served his 10-year sentence from 2013. Meanwhile, Chautala last month said he will contact opposition leaders soon to forge a "third front" at the national level and also revealed plans of a lunch meeting with BJP ally and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar. Asserting that the biggest need today is to get rid of the "anti-people" and "anti-farmer" government at the Centre, Chautala said before September 25, the birth anniversary of former deputy PM Devi Lal, he will try to meet opposition leaders and urge them to come on one platform. "It will be our endeavour to form a strong third front," said the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) leader, who was recently released from jail after serving a 10-year sentence in a recruitment scam. Chautala claimed that if a strong third front is formed, then many who support the government will leave it, ultimately leading to a situation where mid-term polls may take place. "It will be my endeavour to see that a strong third front is formed and later in the polls it achieves success so that this anti-people and corrupt government is routed," the former Haryana chief minister told reporters. On being asked if he will meet West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, he said, "Although this is not an issue of today's topic, I want to tell that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had telephoned me." "He will have lunch with me at my residence on August 1. When two political leaders sit together, then political issues are naturally discussed," he said replying to a query. 



How the inevitable return of the Taliban was so sweeping



When rising British casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq started to raise public doubts 15 years ago, a new mantra began to be heard: Iraq was a war of choice, Afghanistan a war of necessity. The argument was that the US and its faithful ally, Britain, had launched an invasion in Iraq that was unjustified as it was based on a false premise: the hollow claim that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction.

The intervention in Afghanistan was different, it was said, even by many who opposed the Iraq war. Al-Qaida had organised the atrocities of 9/11 and its leader, Osama bin Laden, was based on Afghan soil. George W Bush was right to give the Taliban an ultimatum to hand him over or face invasion.

But here, too, there was a

false premise, or indeed several. Mullah Omar and the Taliban leadership were as surprised to see the twin towers crash to the ground in New York as everyone else. They had never been consulted by Bin Laden on his strategy, let alone his targets. Anticipating US reprisals, Bin Laden and his large entourage of Arab fighters left Kandahar and hid in the Tora Bora Mountains. Bush's call on the Taliban to arrest him was unrealistic. So going after the Taliban was just as unnecessary as bringing regime change in Iraq.

It was also equally dubious from the standpoint of international law. There was no UN Security Council resolution authorising the US assault on Afghanistan. It was clear that Bush would want to punish al-Qaida for 9/11, but international law does not permit armed

force for revenge or retaliation. The US claimed that al-Qaida had declared war on the US and it was entitled to respond with force in self-defence. International law only allows this if an enemy attack is imminent. In the autumn of 2001, imminence was hardly a relevant concept. None of the 19 9/11 hijackers was Afghan and they had mainly trained in Germany and the US. It had taken two years to prepare the attack, so there was no way al-Qaida could have mounted another similar atrocity imminently.

After 9/11, a few analysts argued that if the US was determined to use force it should have limited it to a search-and-destroy operation against al-Qaida in Tora Bora. Their view was ignored and Bush added a new war aim: the building of a modern democracy in

Afghanistan. Joe Biden rejected that in his speech when he stressed that US policy should be based on security from terrorism rather than any humanitarian reforms. His remarks are sparking a furious debate, but they are correct.

It is true that Kabul and other major Afghan cities have enjoyed 20 years of patchy progress. Women in particular have benefited and a generation of young people has grown up with the expectation of secure and free life choices. If the Taliban had not been ousted from power in 2001, none of this would have happened. But the country would have been spared the ravages and killing of the civil war that resumed in 2003 once the Taliban recovered from the shock of defeat. Like the Ashraf Ghani administration, it also just gave up in 2001 under the weight of US bombing with barely a shot fired. It was bound to seek ways to reverse it, however long it took.

In the century since Afghanistan gained independence from Britain in 1919, the country's tragedy has been the constantly repeated cycle of defeat for the minority of Afghan modernisers who have sought to break the hold of conservative rural patriarchy.

It happened with the first post-independence leader, Amanullah Khan, who took power on a wave of popularity but lost it after he introduced co-educational schools and stopped women wearing hijab, let alone the full burqa. Conservatives marched on Kabul in 1929, the army deserted and Amanullah abdicated. Resistance to a new wave of reform arose again in the 1980s when Afghanistan's communists, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), expanded education for girls and increased opportunities for women to work outside the home. When they took Soviet support, they opened the door for an alliance of religious and tribal leaders (helped by western governments at the height of the cold war) to rise up as mujahideen warriors and brand the PDPA as atheists and lackeys of the Kremlin. When Moscow withdrew its aid in 1992 (like Trump and Biden today), the modernising regime quickly fell. Now we are seeing a third turn of the wheel of conservatives ousting reformers. Observers wonder how the Taliban managed to achieve so sweeping a victory. The sad fact is that its patriarchal views are popular

in rural and small-town Afghanistan and it could never have made its stunning military advances without local support. People had also lost faith in a corrupt central government and an army that the Pentagon was well aware was ineffective and unmotivated - as revealed in the "Afghanistan Papers", hundreds of confidential interviews with US military and diplomatic leaders obtained by the media.

Many Afghans felt the Taliban produced quicker and more honest justice in village disputes between families. The UK government should have known this. Surveys commissioned for the Department for International Development in Helmand in 2010 showed that people preferred Taliban courts to the Kabul-appointed ones, where they had to bribe prosecutors and judges. Afghans do not like invaders, whatever their motives and the Taliban were able to exploit the narrative of patriotic resistance. Why did Britain ignore the lessons of history and follow the unhappy experience of the Soviet invasion and occupation? That must be the central issue to ponder over by the US and Britain. 🇺🇸

Lord Jagannath's Idol Installation Ceremony in Manchester

Manchester, Aug 22/08: (Kishore diwbedi) The second largest city of the United Kingdom (UK), Manchester on Saturday witnessed the installation ceremony of the Biggest GOD of the Planet, Lord Jagannath amidst pomp and splendor. The religious rituals of Pujarchana, KalasYatra, DevPujana, Abhishek, Murti S thapana, and Prana Pratishtha commenced in the morning with pious and spiritual fervor. The detailed proceedings of worshipping were performed solemnly as per Hindu scripture in front of the four deities, Lord of the Universe Shree Jagannath, His Elder Brother Lord Balabhadra, His Sister Goddess Devi Subhadra, and Lord Sudarshan. To mark the auspicious occasion the entire structure of Gita Bhawan Hindu Temple at 231, Withington Road, where the Gods and Goddess are presently stationed has been decked up

with different hues of colors. In the afternoon around 12.45 to 1.45 p.m. the NamaYagna, Homo, Bhoga, Mahaarati, and Pushpanjali programs were conducted before the deities under the guidance of Priests AcharyaMedinipati Mishra of Glasgow Hindu Temple and AcharyaShyam Sunder Sharma of Gita Bhawan. Nearly Five hundred Odia and Non- Odia devotees along with their families congregated to witness the much sought-after spectacular ceremony. At about 2.30 p.m. the deities were taken in Pahandi procession to the aesthetically and colorfully decorated chariot parked inside the premises of Gita Bhawan. The Chariot was constructed and decorated under the guidance of JeebanPanigrahi, Bishnu Dash, and PrasantaSahu. The atmosphere got reverberated with the recitals of hymns, the roaring of slogans like haribol and Jai Jagannath, sound-

ing of musical instruments like Kartala, Mardala, Jhanja, and Mrudanga. The majestic and magnetic view of the Supreme Saviour of mankind from the magnificent Chariot was unique and ethereal. The assembled Indian and foreign devotees had the holy glimpses of the Deities on Chariot, which is treated as the most sacred act in the Hindu religion.

Dr.SibaSenapati undertook the traditional services of sweeping on the chariot called ChheraPahanra. Around 2.30 p.m. amidst the devotional renderings of kirtan, recital of Bhajans, Jananas, the chariot was pulled till two miles distance to Alexandra Park in the city and then pulled back to the temple premises. The unique and unusual scenery of the Royal sojourn of Lord of the Universe on rolling chariot passing through Withington Road, Wilbraham Road, Brantingham



Road, and Alexandra Road South was just marvelous and mesmerizing. Earlier the four wooden deities made out of Neem tree were carved to their present shapes in puri and were specially couriered to Manchester. The trustee of the Hindu Cultural Society, the Founding and Managing body of Gita Bhawan, Raj Kumar Kaushal extended his full cooperation and support for the installation of Lord Jagannath at Gita Bhawan. The Deities were offered Prasad in the evening diligently prepared by

the ISKCON team. The assembled devotees also had the pleasure of parting the delicious Prasad having the flavor of Abhadas of Anand Bazar in Puri. With the installation of Four deities at Manchester, the long-cherished dreams of the Odia residents of North West England have been accomplished, expressed the main organizers and noted Jagannath devotees Dr.Siba Senapati and Smt. Rekha Senapati. The other organizers who played a vital role in successfully organizing the instal-

lation ceremony and Car Festival include Jeeban Panigrahi, DurgeshNandini, Prasanta Sahu, Roseleen Biswal, Bishnu Dash, Sushri Mishra, Siba Ranjan Biswal, Pooja Khandal. Presentations of scintillating cultural shows by celebrated artists were also part of the celebration. These include recitals of devotional songs by Nirushree Nirlipta Mohanty and Drishika Panigrahi, Bharatanatyam dance performance by Nritya Ram Mohan, and Odissi dance recital by Elena Evelyn and Gracy Aurora. The distinguished dignitaries present during the celebration include Dr.Nisheeta Das, Dr. Ramesh Routray, Dr.RinaRoutray, Dr.Nirendra Jena, Smt. Bidyut Jena, Dr.Bibhuprasad Dash, Dr.Sangeeta Dash, Smt. Mamata Nayak, Dr.Jeenita Mohanty, Dr.PrakashDey and Dr.DebakantaBehera. 🇮🇳

Sumit, Avani wins gold, sets new World Record



Avani Lekhara

It was a day of rare and delightful sporting highs for India at the Paralympic Games as the country won an unprecedented 5 medals - 2 gold, 2 silver and a bronze - in a single day in Tokyo. The winners also included the country's first-ever Paralympic gold medal winning woman athlete in shooter Avani Lekhara.

The day's developments took India's total medal tally to 7, their best ever at a Paralympic Games, raising hopes of ushering in a revolution for differently-abled athletes in a country where even ramps for the disabled are a rarity in public places.

India's Sumit Antil on Monday set a new world

record to win the gold medal in the men's javelin throw (F64) event at the ongoing Tokyo Paralympics. With the best throw of 68.85 m in the final in Japan, he took India's medal count to 7.

Sumit began with a throw of 66.95m to top the standings after round 1. He then consolidated his position with his second throw of 68.08m and smashed the previous world record. In the third and fourth throws, respectively, he threw



Sumit Antil



Devendra Jhajharia

65.27m and 66.71.

However, Sumit wasn't done yet. He set a new world record on his fifth attempt, throwing the javelin 66.85m from the starting line. He capped off the historic grand finale with a throw of

His compatriot, Sandeep Chaudhary, finished fourth in the competition with a personal best of 62.20m.

While Australia's Michael Burian bagged silver, Sri Lanka's Dulan Kodithuwakku took

home bronze.

Earlier on Monday, the Indian contingent began the day by winning four medals in a span of one hour. The first medal of the day, which was India's fifth, was clinched by shooter Avani Lekhara. She won India's first medal in shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 event on Monday. Lekhara won the gold medal with a total score of 249.6 in the final, equalling the world record.

Record squad, India eye their biggest medal

The 19-year-old also scripted history becoming the first Indian woman to win a gold medal at the Paralympics. Overall, she is the fourth Indian athlete to win a Paralympics gold after swimmer Murlikant Petkar (1972), javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia (2004 and 2016), and high jumper Thangavelu Mariyappan (2016).

India then won two medals in the men's javelin throw (F46) event. While

Devendra Jhajharia won the silver medal with his best throw of 64.35, Sundar Singh Gurjar won the bronze medal in the same event with his best throw of 64.01.

On Sunday, India had won two medals with star paddler Bhavinaben Patel won silver in women's singles table tennis class 4. Later, Nishad Kumar earned the country its second medal by winning silver in the T47 event on Sunday. He set an Asian record.



Nishad Kumar



Bhavinaben Patel