

CM Naveen Patnaik Launches Rs 827 Cr Worth Welfare Projects In Bolangir, Visit Marked By Protests

In all, the CM inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 128 welfare projects which will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 827 crore.



Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik distributes BSKY smart health cards to women beneficiaries at a function in Titlagarh, Bolangir

Bolangir, Sep 22: Congress party workers staged demonstrations in front of the District Collector's office in Bolangir during Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's visit to the district to inaugurate a series of developmental projects on Wednesday.

The protest was over the fulfilment of a 14-point charter of demands which include the inclusion of all in the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) smart health card scheme, declaring the district a complete drought zone, setting up of an agricultural university

and a High Court bench in Bolangir apart from the immediate revival of Deogaon sugar factory.

Earlier today, the police picked up Congress leader Ramesh Purohit along with 20 of his followers. The police action was subsequent to an

announcement made by Purohit to hold a sit-in outside the Patnagarh Sub-Collector's office during the CM's visit to the district today.

Purohit and his supporters were whisked away in a police van in the morning when they reached the Sub-Collector's office to stage the proposed agitation and submit a memorandum.

While the protest by Congress workers and leaders were on, the family members of one Prasadi Putel of Belgaon village in Saintala block in the district staged a demonstration at the site of the water supply project in the village which was later inaugurated by the CM in virtual mode.

Putel alleged that the local authorities had forcefully occupied 38 decimal of his family land for the construction of the project. However, the police swiftly picked up the protesting family later in the day. (Page-7)

Tata Steel concludes public hearing on Joda East mines production enhancement



Sirish C Mohanty

Joda: Sep 28: Tata steel has successfully concluded the public hearing today at the central ground here. The



process of the hearing was carried out in a congenial atmosphere with shabby resistance. However, the steel company has assured to give importance to the local people for employment. The company aims to increase production from 12m tonnes to over 17m tonnes to cater the raw material to its Kalinganagar steel plant and

Jamshedpur steelworks.

The company plans to introduce an innovative loading system that generates minimum polluting dust through digitalization in Mining Operations. Through the process of scientific exploration, Mine Planning, Mining, and Beneficiation the company ensure Mineral Conservation. Blending BHF for high silica material and aiming towards zero waste in

mining.

The company further assures a full-fledged TSRDS Team to cover CSR activities in 14 wards of Joda Municipality, 2 Blocks, 8 Gram Panchayats, 37 villages, 128 Hamlets, and 80,000 populations. Best Environment Management practices including reclamation of mined-out pits (Page-7)

Sidhu resigns as Punjab Congress chief



People familiar with the matter in the Congress said that Sidhu is disappointed that he wasn't named the chief minister after Amarinder Singh resigned from the post. It is learnt that he did not meet the Gandhis before taking the decision to quit the post.

In a sudden development, Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu (Page-7)

Captain Amarinder Singh joining BJP: He is likely to be Agriculture minister

NEW DELHI, Sep 28: Captain Amarinder Singh is scheduled to arrive in the national capital on Tuesday evening, days after he quit as the Chief Minister of Punjab amid political turmoil in the Congress-ruled state. After his arrival here, the Punjab Congress veteran is expected to hold a series of meetings with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda.

The proposed Singh-Shah-Nadda meeting has triggered intense speculations about the Punjab Congress leader joining the BJP in the days to come. Zee Media sources said that Captain Amarinder Singh may be inducted into PM Narendra Modi's Council of Ministers as



Union Agriculture Minister.

It has also emerged that the BJP central leadership may help Captain Amarinder Singh float a new political outfit in case he refuses to join BJP. This way, Singh would be persuaded to be part of the BJP-led NDA (Page-7)

Bhubaneswar School Student Swept Away in Drain, Body Found After 20-hour Search

Bhubaneswar, Sep 20: A team of fire services personnel recovered a body from a drain near Panchasakha Nagar in Bhubaneswar after a 20-hour search operation. A 15-year old boy, Jyoti Prakash Behera, went missing after falling into an open stormwater channel on Sunday afternoon. The close relatives of the boy have identified the body at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar. Jyoti fell into the floodwater-filled turbulent drain with his cycle near Satabdi Nagar

Bank Colony in the Siripur area while going to attend tuition classes. In no time, he was swept away by the heavy current in the drain due to torrential rain. Soon after the incident, a team of around 40 fire brigade personnel, along with police and residents launched a frantic search and rescue operation to trace the missing boy. Locals and opposition political



parties Congress and BJP have blamed the State government and the local city civic administration for mismanagement of drains, poor drainage system, illegal encroachment and negligence of BMC that led to the accident. Meanwhile, the Odisha government announced a compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the family of Jyoti Prakash Behera. Social Security and Science & Technology Minister Ashok Panda said, "A compensation of Rs 4 lakh will be provided to the bereaved family as per relief code."

Asit Tripathy Elected President Of Bhubaneswar Club, Sanjukta Mohapatra New President Of Cuttack Club

Both the Bhubaneswar Club and the Cuttack Club have got new presidents with the declaration of results of elections to the clubs on Monday.

Bhubaneswar, Sep 27: Former chief secretary Asit Tripathy has been elected as president of the prestigious Bhubaneswar Club in the Capital city. Tripathy reportedly defeated contestant Bijay Patnaik by 278 votes.

After the two-day-long election to the Bhubaneswar Club which began on Saturday, the counting of votes was conducted today. While Tripathy bagged a total of 776 votes, Bijay managed to get 498 votes in his favour.

"As per the results which the Returning Officer announced for the President post, I have won the

election. I thank the Club's management, the Returning Officer and other officials," said the former top bureaucrat.

Tripathy further said that he contested for the post as it will enable him to contribute towards the dreams of a multi-dimensional club.

Elections to several posts were pending following the demise of the Club's former president Priyabrat Patnaik and the subsequent Coronavirus pandemic situation.

The poll was conducted for a total of six vacant posts like vice-president, secretary and general secretary among



others.

On the other hand, in the elections for selection of the office bearers of the Cuttack Club, Sanjukta Mohapatra has won the poll to become the president.

While Mohapatra has been elected as the president, Satyaki Ghosh was elected as

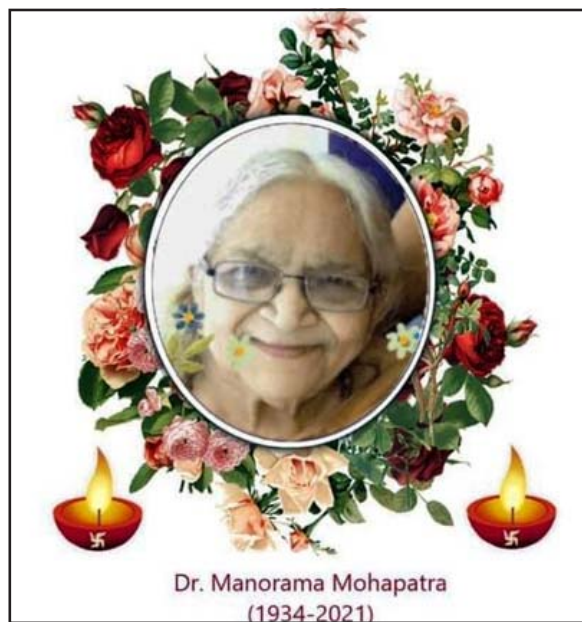
the secretary of the Cuttack Club.

Mohapatra got a total of 446 votes while the other contestants (for the president post) Ananga Mohan Dwibedy and Bijoy Keshari Rout bagged 239 and 206 votes, respectively.

Global Odias paid Glowing Tributes to Dr. Manorama Mohapatra

Cuttack, Sep 20 (Kishore Diwbedi): Glowing tributes paid to Late Dr. Manorama Mohapatra by Global Odias. In a midnight online condolence meeting organized by the World Odisha Society (WOS) hours after Dr. Mohapatra's death on Saturday Odias diaspora worldwide prayed almighty to rest her in permanent peace. Describing Dr. Mohapatra as an outstanding literature, prolific writer, erudite editor, awesome orator, exemplary social leader, and affectionate mother figure, the distinguished speakers offered rich homage to the departed soul. Hundreds of prominent Non-Resident Odias, representatives of Odia Samaj of different Countries, well-wishers, and family members of Dr. Mohapatra spreading over the Globe attended the prayer session. More than thousands of viewers witnessed the obit Event through live streaming by social networks. Presiding over the Webinar, The Chairman of World Odisha Society Kishore Dwibedi fondly remembered his long

and eventful association with her. Shri Dwivedi remarked that Dr. Mohapatra was a woman of immense substance and abundant fortitude. In his obituary reference renowned scholar Dr. Haraparsad Das described Dr. Manorama Mohapatra as the identity of Odia race and existence. Her impeccable personality was unparalleled, Dr. Das added. Paying his tribute Secretary of Odisha Sahitya Akademi Prabodh Rout recounted her illustrious contribution to enriching the literary firmament of Odisha during her Presidentship of the Akademi from 1991 to 1993. The demise of Dr. Mohapatra caused an irreparable loss to Odia Literature, said Shri Rout. Director of IIPM Dr. Arundhati Debi pointed out that Dr. Mohapatra's eloquent oratory was not only casting the magic spell in the meetings but used to evoke mesmerizing impact on the masses. Branding Dr. Mohapatra as a unique person, Jayashri Nanda from the U.K. said that she has had excelled simultaneously as a top



litterateur, brilliant professor, exceptional editor, pious soul, lovable daughter, and Godly mother. Editor of Pratibesi Magazine Pitambar Barik from Kolkata observed that her departure is the most painful news for the literary world. Offering his ovation Dharendra Kar from the U.S.A outlined that Dr. Mohapatra had attained the highest echelon as a writer, litterateur, social leader, motivator, and mother in Odisha. Akshay

Mohanty from the USA said that Dr. Mohapatra was symbolizing the charm and charisma of womanhood. President of Odisha Samaj U.A.E. Amiya Mishra explained that her teaching skill was extraordinary. Jitendra Kumar Mohanty recalled that Dr. Mohapatra's inspiration and mentoring were in the highest order. Dr. Mohapatra's student Lalit Kumar Pradhan depicted her as a motherly teacher.

General Secretary of Odisha Samaj U.K. Siba Ranjan Biswal mentioned that her lasting contribution to Odia literature is noteworthy. Banojini Nayak from Singapore opined that Dr. Mohapatra was the proud and privileged Daughter of Odisha's soil. Showering their praises Surya and Tiki Mishra from the USA, portrayed her as a role model of women's advancement and empowerment in the post-independence era. Paying her salutation Nalini Patnaik from the USA elaborated on her human attitude and social service characteristics. President of Samaj Representatives Association Maheswar Bal eulogized her leading role as the Founder of the youth wing of Servants of the People Society. Prashant Bhuyan from Canada said that her oratory, vocabulary, and literary rendition were uncommon. Dr. Sitansu Sekhar Nanda from South Korea informed that in the very first meeting with Dr. Mohapatra, he was completely overwhelmed by her treasure of talent and

knowledge. President of Bhubaneswar's Rotary Club Eco Ramkrishna Dash underlined that her passing away has created an irreparable void in the space of creative literature. Lipsa Patnaik Mohanty attributed her as a master woman with many parts. Renowned Singer Kailash Baishnab and noted vocalists from New Delhi Pushpanjali Barik and Santosh Rout offered their prayers through musical notes. Others who expressed their condolences during the digital deliberation include Chandra Mishra, Hara & Sumitra Padhi, Dhiraj Chadha, Pratap Rout, Dr. Ashok Kumar Rout, Dr. Rabi Narayan Behera, and Satyabrata Mohanty.

Prominent personalities present during the web condolence meeting include B.N.Satpathy, Krupanidhi Biswal, Balhan Sagar, Mohit Moshra, Sudhashree Dash, Subas Sahoo, Pitabas Routray, Dr Sagar Ranjan Tripathy, Jayant Gantayat, Sanjay Dalai, Pritish Dash, Rita Satapathy, Shrimant Biswal, Ahlaya Barik and Sanatan Mahak.

US corp pledge elusive, and Bad bank is expensive



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

The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US has tried to kindle hopes in an economy that needs investment but the American companies yet have not given any firm commitments at the meetings with corporate CEOs.

India has taken many steps to bring in reforms through an asset reconstruction construction company (ARC) or the bad bank, lower interest rates, networked businesses, and chain of roads.

The Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. He also met his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison and Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga. PM Modi also participated in the first in-person Quad meeting after

COVID-19. He also held meetings with five global CEOs for potential investment in India on Thursday.

Some companies like Qualcomm has investments wireless modem, digital media networking, dairy transportation to defence. Now PM suggests them invest in hi-tech sectors and measures to strengthen the innovation ecosystem. Since Qualcomm is in India since 1996, it may continue to increase its operations but that would be its business decision.

General Atomics, which opened its first office in India in 2018, is making significant contributions to deepen India-US defence and security cooperation. It is working with both

governments to provide India with the latest defence systems and technologies. It has also partnered with Indian companies to develop solutions for Indian defence as well as capacity building.

Investments in real estate too are always lucrative. Blackstone has so far invested \$ 15 billion in real estate, private equity, real estate, education, fashion, packaging, and housing finance. It would continue to do so as per the meeting with its CEO Stephen Schwarzman.

Blackstone Real Estate Fund is said to be the largest owner of commercial real estate in India. The company played a key role in launching India's first real estate investment trust (REIT) along with its partner Embassy Group in 2019 and has since then launched two REITs in the country.

The Quad is the symbolic multilateral body. It provides a platform to seek cooperation from like-minded countries on issues like ensuring respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty, and peaceful resolution of disputes. It is a kind of united front to check the unceremonious and belligerent activities of China. As US President Joe Biden says it plans to open up to build a free Indo-Pacific. The Quad leaders agree to scale up collective strategic cooperation. It is gaining momentum but

still, China could not be contained to the extent it is planning.

There may be gains in the future. As of now, it is expectations amid not-so-good situations in the domestic arena. The country's non-performing assets increased because of not only the business cycle but also many underwritings. Various steps like taming inflation, the Insolvency, and Bankruptcy Act, Real Estate Regulatory Act, and GST did not add to the desired growth. These have shaken the system and market confidence. The rules are more stringent and do not help the people. The foreign investors though may be keen also have apprehensions, which partially the scrapping of the retrospective taxation may help.

Corporate tax rates were cut but it ignored the pivot of the individual. His taxes peaked during 2019. It hit the basic capacity of the individual to ride through a crisis pandemic situation. At 42 percent plus various cesses, India has the highest tax rates. The gestures by the foreign countries would not be enough to bring that confidence back. It would be welcome even now to cut the income tax rates. It would boost the individual's capabilities and benefit the whole economy as he consumes more.

The lower interest rate is playing havoc along with tax deductions on

deposit hedging against inflation that interest accrual does. It affects the developmental process. To accelerate development, the interest rates must be lowered.

Economic development is a complex matter. It cannot be done merely by the government but needs the involvement of all - businesses and the public in their various sphere of activity. The pattern may be the level of cooperation and social discipline seen in ASEAN - Southeast Asian nations. The country needs to ponder how the entire system is revamped.

The new ARC or the bad bank with the limited government guarantee will remove Rs 22.14 lakh crore (\$ 30 billion) NPAs from the system. Since now it will be now under one entity resolution would be easier, it is being said. A bad bank is not all virtue. It started in 1988 with Mellon Bank, which created a bad bank to hold \$ 1.4 billion bad loans. Others who have it are Sweden following the Swedish bank crisis in 1992, UK, Germany, France, Finland, Indonesia and Belgium, and many others. The US sub-prime mortgage crisis has been one of the worst global tragedies.

The world experience sees bad banks having excessive and hidden fees, funds or cheques bounces, most expensive debts, loyalty means virtually nothing, large errors and mistakes, and failing to honor the

promises. Though it separates the good funds from the stressed, it has not been a solution to the NPA crisis. It may reduce bailouts but it is not ruled out. It can create a new kind of market in dealing with stressed loans but there are apprehensions that asset buyers may resort to harsh unethical methods.

In a difficult situation, new methods are likely but it also has to be remembered that all Euro-US models of the capital market should not be copied as the financial literacy is poor here and even in the most developed countries. Moreover, Indian society is far more complex and heterogeneous. A complicated system may not be a proper solution. Hiving off bad assets may be practical but settling those or reselling those for the realization of dues is not easy and would have many complications as each of the cases are different. True, the nation will chart out its course. Setting the new course is not easy and none as of now has a clear idea of how it would function.

The country has to balance critical situations with well-thought-of measures. Demonetisation had done a lot of harm and had given a jolt to the economy. These new steps may have the capacity to give further jolts. While cajoling for foreign investments is a good idea along with make in India, but a self-sufficient atmanirbhar economy would need much more.

Positive Response to RSP's 5,000 Crore Expansion Plan

ROURKELA, Sep 22: : Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) is all set for another expansion with the addition of new production units and technological measures at a cost of around Rs 5,000 crore. Although RSP will not have to acquire any extra land for the new units as an expansion program will be carried out inside the existing RSP boundary. So there is no threat of any kind of displacement of people from their homes in adjacent areas.

But all expansion and modernization programs carry

attending the public hearing were in favor of the projects. People attending the public hearing supported the RSP's move.

34 speakers of different political parties, labor unions, social organizations, and individuals expressed their views. Most of them supported the proposal. But they warned that no new land would be allowed to be acquired. They also urged RSP to provide jobs to local youths in the proposed expansion work.

It is to be noted that RSP proposes to set up in line with



some environmental, air, and water pollution issues with them. So to allay the fear of this regard a public hearing on environmental impact and to take approval for expansion projects worth Rs.5,419 crore was conducted by Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) on 13th September at the Bhanja Bhavan Exhibition ground. Presided by Sundargarh ADM Biswajit Mohapatra the public hearing evoked a positive response.

Although the OSPCB hearing was meant to focus on environmental issues, it turned out to be a platform to express resentment against RSP for not fulfilling the rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) conditions and not ensuring basic amenities to earlier displaced people living in Resettlement colonies. Speakers said locals support the RSP's upcoming initiatives, but the company should not make further delays to redress the grievances of the displaced people and extend basic amenities to the residents of its territorial jurisdiction.

Speakers also raised the issues concerning employment for local people and ensuring minimum salary for them as per union government's norms. Despite some strong resentment voices against the RSP majority of those

the National Steel Policy to increase production capacity of hot metal from the current level of 4.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to 4.855 MTPA, crude steel from 4.2 MTPA to 4.85 MTPA and saleable steel from 3.880 MTPA to 4.325 MTPA. Accordingly, new coke ovens battery-7 with a production capacity of 0.770 MTPA will come up near coke ovens battery-6, new steel melting shop (SMS)-3 having 1.15 MTPA capacity will be set up adjacent to SMS-1 and normalizing furnace with 0.3 MTPA capacity will be installed inside the new plate mill to cater to niche market segments. Similarly, a new oxygen plant with a capacity of 1,000 tonnes per day would be set up near the existing plant to meet the enhanced capacity of the blast furnaces (BFs) and also cater to medical oxygen need. Arunava Das Gupta, Chief General Manager (Utility and Environment) of RSP replied to the questions raised at the meeting. He assured the gathering that RSP is committed to the Rourkela's prosperity, greenery, keep it safe from air and water pollution. "RSP would to allay the concerns raised by different speakers on priority basis", he said.

CM Distribute Smart Health Cards In Rourkela

Rourkela, Sep 22: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik distributed smart health cards under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) to beneficiaries in steel city in a function held at the Auditorium of Super Speciality hospital on 14th September. He also inaugurated a slew of development projects in the Sundergarh district.

CM Naveen Patnaik distributed BSKY Smart Health Cards to seven beneficiaries from the district.

The BSKY scheme will benefit 15,09,631 people in Sundergarh including 2,23,418 people in Rourkela alone.

On this occasion, CM Patnaik said, "Odisha is the first state in the country to launch family health coverage of Rs 5 lakh annually and Rs 10 lakh for



women."

"Sundargarh is the second district to get smart health cards under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY). The cards were first distributed in the Malkangiri district on August 20. The smart health card would remove the hospitalization burden on people as the government would now bear the treatment cost," he said.

"The State's 4.5 crore people are my family and every life is precious to me. I aim to ensure healthcare

services to all."

He also reiterated the demand for Odisha's second AIIMS at Sundargarh town and said the BJD government would continue to follow up the legitimate demand of the people of Sundargarh with the Centre till it is materialized", he said

The state government had announced the scheme on August 15, 2018, to provide universal health coverage with a special focus on economically weak sections in the society. Similarly,

announced on 75th Independence Day Smart Health Cards allows 3.6 cr people of 96 lakh families in the State to avail free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh (Rs 10 lakh for women) per annum at 200+ hospitals both in Odisha and abroad. Cashless treatment is available through the card which is provided to the holders of Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana, BPL, and AAY.

On this occasion, CM also dedicated projects of education, infrastructure, health, livelihood, sanitation, women, and child development worth Rs 580.82 crore for the district.

All Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana cardholders, BPL card holders, AAY cardholders, and low-income families are eligible to avail of the benefit.

RSP Shines at Global Communication Conclave

Rourkela, Sep 22: The senior officers of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) bagged several awards at the 15th Global Communication Conclave held in Goa recently.

The steel plant bagged Gold Award in 'Public Service film', Silver Award in 'Best use of Social Media', Bronze Award in 'Internal Communication Campaign' and Consolation award in 'COVID Management in Public Sector in the Global Conclave.

The conclave was held under the Public Relations Council of India, a pan-India Communication Exchange

forum, and the Young Communicators Club. It was inaugurated by Governor of Goa PS Sreedharan Pillai on September 17.

The theme of the conclave was 'Communication in the new decade - Mapping the Mega Trends'.

The RSP team of Dharendra Mishra, GM In-charge (Personnel-Works), Archana Satpathy, DGM(PR) CoC, and Sasanka S Pattanaik, Assistant Manager (PR) received the awards from Govind Gaude, Art & Culture Minister. 'Chanakya Award' as 'Communicator of the Year' was presented to Dharendra



Mishra by Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The prestigious 'Ameya Award' and 'Best Motivator Award' went to Archana Satpathy.

'Ameya Award' is presented to women achievers for excellence in their

respective fields.

The awards were presented in recognition of RSP's effective, visible and impacting practices in different initiatives which have helped the company is excelling in its plethora of endeavors.

SAIL Employees Long Wait For Wage Revision Continues

Rourkela, Sept 22: 57 months have passed since the previous wage revision agreement between SAIL Management and its employees has expired. The public sector SAIL worker's wage agreement is revised every five years.

The wage revision is made through a collective bargaining process by a joint meeting between SAIL management and NJCS (National Joint Committee for Steel comprising

members of five Central trade unions i.e., INTUC, HMS, AITUC, CITU, and BMS).

The last five years wage agreement expired on 31 December/2016. The new agreement should have come into effect from 1st January 2017. Workers were supposed to get newly revised wages and other benefits like MGB, perks, etc from the above-mentioned date. But it is still pending as both sides are not arriving at a

mutual consensus even after 12 rounds of negotiation in the last two years. This has infuriated SAIL employees and trade unions are on warpath to get due to wage revision as the latest discussion of the National Joint Committee for Steel (NJCS) held in Delhi on 6 and 7th September failed to finalize wage negotiation of employees. It is frustrating to see that negotiation which began on 1st March 2019 has completed 12

rounds so far but has yet to yield results.

Trade union leaders say due to inordinate delay in wage revision, the workers were not only losing financial benefit but were living with mental agony and financial hardships. The labor leaders urged management to make a final decision at the earliest. They say SAIL has been earning huge profits since the 2018-19 financial year.

Ex MLA Umesh Swain decries prawn Gheries demolition bid in the coastline

JAGATSINGHPUR, Sep 25: The former Balikuda MLA Umesh Swain has lambasted Jagatsinghpur district administration over prawn Gheries demolition drive launching in Erasama and Balikuda coastline. He described the act as discouraging prawn and marine fish production in the district as well inviting miseries for hundreds of Cherie growers and their dependents, in this regard, the ex-legislator Swain has apprised Odisha Chief Secretary [CS] Suresh Chandra Mohapatra seeking his intervention.

In the meantime, civil administration has clarified over Swain's allegations citing the prawn Gheries demolition has been undertaken following a High Court order and different provisions enshrined under environmental laws to protect coastal environment and

forest. Marine fish production has not been affected in the district, many shrimp farmers in coastal pockets have been assisted, the administration clarification revealed.

The tog war between Swain and the administration began causing Gheries demolition drive to start in Balikuda coastline in mid-August 2021. As many as 500 acres of forest land were detected under Balikuda seaside villages in Mala and Marichapur revenue circles. Few villagers have been utilizing the forest land erecting illegal prawn Gheries violating coastal Regulation Zone [CRZ] and coastal Aquaculture Act [CAA] and the Water prevention and control of pollution Act 1974.

Tahasildar Balikuda issued notices to the alleged prawn Gheri owners to demolish the prawn ponds and appear before the revenue courts for defending the

allegation. As many as 228 encroachers had attended the Tahasil court and a punitive fine of Rs 3000 per acre had been collected from the alleged encroachers. Besides, that administration launched Gheries cleaning drive on August 18. Swain's allegations against the administration that before enforcing OLR Act section 4 and 6 the prawn growers had not been heard properly, they had been forced to pay fine superfluously, moreover the said OLR act section 8[A] stipulates that those had been occupying and encroaching government land above three and four decades are merit and eligible to get recorded the land his name, but administration disobeyed the rules.

Moreover prawn cultivation in the seashore a hereditary profession of coastal residents for decades, they are getting employment and contributing revenue to

the state exchequer regularly, if prawn cultivation would be a halt in coast citing reasons of environmental degradation and forest destruction thousand would be unemployed and state will lose revenue, Swain alleged.

Jagatsinghpur administration defended Swain's allegations that the prawn cherries that had been reported in Erasama and Balikuda coast violate CAA and CRZ Acts and many prawn pond growers are encroaching forest lands and destructing mangrove forest.

Earlier Odisha high court WPC 7469/2017 had ordered to clear the forest land allegedly occupying for prawn culture and farming in seaside villages, so we followed all legal provisions with letter and spirit and described Swain's complaint against administration stands false and fabricated, and administration press release revealed.

Workshop on RPWD Act 2016 held in Jagatsinghpur



JAGATSINGHPUR, Sep 25. The State Commissioner for Persons with disabilities [SCPD] in collaboration with district administration held a workshop and awareness drive over RPWD Act 2016 in the collector office here. The SCPD commissioner Sulochana Das attended the event as chief guest and spoke over the implementation of the provisions of the RPWD Act 2016 and schemes, programs meant for persons with disabilities. The workshop aims to promote awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and the safeguards available for their protection, commissioner Das revealed.

Collector S K Mohapatra presented a report card with regards to the implementation

of the RPWD Act in Jagatsinghpur district, according to the collector, in 2020-21 fiscal 39 disabilities students have given a scholarship, 49 couples have been granted Rs 50,000 each for performing the marriage, 13 disabilities registered SHGs have been promoted with financial assistance, 37 persons with transgender, 61 beggars, 119 leprosy patients are availing RPWD Act benefits in Jagatsinghpur district, collector revealed. The workshop was attended by ADM Jagatsinghpur, Project Director DRDA, CDMO Dr. Bijaya Panda, Additional SP, district social security officer Pabitra Kumar Das, few NGOs working for PWD projects, and officials connected with SCPD in Jagatsinghpur district.

Health worker receives National Florence Nightingale Award 2020



JAGATSINGHPUR, Sep 25: The President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind has conferred the National Florence Nightingale Award 2020 to a Paradip-based health worker Premalata Barik at a virtual ceremony held in NIC Bhubaneswar on September 15.

The award was conferred by the President

to 51 health care workers and nurses across the country for their selfless dedication and compassion especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, the function was participated by union health and family welfare minister Mansukh Mandaviya and state minister Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar, Premalata Barik was the only awardee

from Odisha who received this prestigious award for the year 2020.

This prestigious award was instituted by the union health ministry in the year 1973 as a mark of recognition for the meritorious services of the health sector carries Rs 50,000 in cash, a certificate, a citation certificate, and a medal.

Dhinkia residents oppose land transfer to IDCO

JAGATSINGHPUR, Sep 25: The Dhinkia Panchayat under Erasama block reported to be tense as villagers stage protests opposing a revenue department notification proposing land transfer to IDCO. Hundreds of men and women gathered at Phulakhai temple and held a protest meeting opposing the government notification and marched to Dhinkia Panchayat office where they burnt the government communication displayed on the notice board.

A government notification was issued by Erasama Tahasil on August 18, 2021, stating about 746 Acres of Land from Nuagaon Panchayat would be transferred to IDCO, Bhubaneswar to be used for industrial

purposes.

The notification had instructed the general public and residents to furnish their opinion through affidavit and relevant records before Tahasildar Erasama within 30 days.

Interestingly, in gross carelessness of the Tahasil authority to display the notification in Dhinkia Panchayat office on September 15, 2021, just three days ahead of the last day for the public to raise their objection and opinion.

In the meanwhile, due to incessant rains that occurred past three days, many low-lying areas of Dhinkia and Nuagaon Panchayat have been submerged, paddy fields have witnessed knee-deep waters, people are staying indoor, for now,

administration issuing the notification, rued Dhinkia PS member Debendra Swain. However, PS members questioned Erasama Tahasil's authority act with regards to displaying the notification late in Dhinkia Panchayat.

Nityananda Swain who was presiding the protest meeting described the administration's actions as appears suspicious, trying to ignore residents before land transfer bid to IDCO, so they displayed the communication late, we will not tolerate the official discrepancy committed by Erasama revenue authority, years back Posco like situation likely to be repeated at the village in coming days, Swain warned.

Villagers of low lying areas in Bishnupur GP of Balasore district evacuated



Baripada, Sept 19: With water in major river systems Subamarekha and Budhabalanga in Balasore district are started receding from danger level on Saturday but the situation of the residents in low lying areas are very grimed as hectares of vegetable, paddy and jute along with house belongings and stocked rice and paddy in huge amount were damaged while the water in major rivers Subamarekha and Budhabalanga entered to these areas. Particularly Bhograi, Baliapal, Bast, Jaleswar, Remuna, Nilagiri and Balasore Sadar block's 220103 people over 331 villages under 70 Gram Panchayats along with 11 wards in Balasore and Jaleswar Municipalities were affected due to heavy rainfall and

flood, said District emergency department official to TNIE on Saturday.

Though the water in major river systems have started receding, the water does not recede from 109 villages in low lying areas and have remained marooned for a couple of days, said district emergency officer Rizwana Kawkab. The district administration had evacuated at least 80 persons from low lying villages and taken them to flood shelter houses and nearest safer places like schools and three times dry ration, cooked food were provided to them after setting up of 3 kitchen centres in different locations. Fortunately no human and domestic animal casualty was yet to be reported in the tragedy,

the emergency officer said, adding that approximately crops in 27, 726 hectares submerged and 272 houses were partly damaged across the district. A medical team and a veterinary team were deployed besides distributing 30 quintal Chuda and 3 quintal Gud to people of affected areas.

Besides the water level is flowing at 6.28 meter above the danger level at 5.50 meter in Jalaka at Mathani the water in two major river systems started flowing below the danger level. While water is flowing at 7.02 meter against 10.36 meter in Subarnarekha River at Rajghat, water level is at 6.22 meter against the danger level at 8.13 meter in Budhabalanga near NH-16.

Technical team of aviation department takes stocks of Amarda air strip

Baripada, September 18: A technical team of the aviation department led by the Joint General Manager of Bhubaneswar Zone Goutam Roy along with Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Tribal Affairs visited British-era Amarda Airstrip at Rashgobindpur on Thursday in Mayurbhanj district to take stock of the airstrip that remains neglected for years. Besides the zone manager, Assistant General Managers Sanjay Kar and Mahamad Nasim and Senior manager (architect) Sunil Singh of the team along with Rashgobindpur Tehsildar and Additional Tehsildar Nirlit Mohanty and Ananta Hembram and some BJP party workers were present with the team. The minister said that the four officials of the technical team visited the Amarda Airstrip, one of the largest airstrips of Asia, to take stock of its



situation under the direction of the Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. The renovation of the Amarda airstrip will start in 2022 under the UDAN scheme, said the minister while presenting his second annual report card. As per reports, the Defence Ministry had decided to set up an Air Force training center for fighter pilots in 2008. Former General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Lieutenant General Jayanta Kumar Mohanty visited the abandoned airstrip in December 2008 and had expressed satisfaction over the suitability of the area for setting up the training center, but any cause it had not progressed.

Small Farm Mechanisation for Kharif Rice in Mayurbhanj district

Baripada, 18 Sep. 21:- In collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Shyamakhunta in Mayurbhanj district demonstration of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) introduced bullock drawn puddler which as many as eight rows pre-germinated paddy seeder was conducted in farmers' field. Experimentally it was introduced in Rangamatia village under Shyamakhunta block recently.

Prof Sangram Keshari Swain, the research engineer of the project, said about the benefits of the project that implements to the satisfaction of the huge gathering of farmers on the field. The OUAT Puddler takes only 4 hours to cover one acre with the provision of seating for the operator while conventionally for puddling, it takes around 16 to 18 hours with deshi (Country) wooden plow with lots of hard work for the operator who walks on the muddy field. The OUAT pre-germinated paddy seeder takes only 3



to 4 hours to cover one acre for line sowing of pre-germinated paddy seeds on raised beds with the provision of seating for the operator. In comparison, in the conventional method for manual transplanting, around 25 man-days are required involving huge cost, labour, time, and drudgery. These Implements are available for the farmers with subsidy from the State Government as reported by Dr Swain. The small and marginal farmers of Mayurbhanj district still depend on animal energy for different field operations in

rice cultivation as the size of land holdings goes on reducing with an increase in population apart from undulated topography followed by prevailing poor socio-economic status. At the instance of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Govt of India, the All India Coordinated Research Project on Utilization of Animal Energy operating in College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (OUAT) has been engaged since last decade to develop and popularize improved bullock

drawn implements suitable for smallholdings with higher output, lesser cost of operation, labour requirement, time and drudgery involvement. With the increasing shortage of agricultural labourers during peak hours of need, these implements are found just handy for the majority of rice-growing small farmers of the district. With a good number of programs in the district by the project, already scheduled it is expected that the farming community will be immensely benefited.

Chemical Discharge From Paradip Refinery Damaging Crops

Refuting the allegation, IOCL authorities claimed that no such wastewater was released into farmlands



Paradip, Sep 27: Farmers from Trilochanpur village and the adjoining areas under Dhinkia Panchayat in Jagatsinghpur district have alleged that their standing crop has suffered damages due to the discharge of chemical wastes from the nearby Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) refinery at Paradip. The farmers claimed that water mixed with toxic oil, discharged from the refinery, flowing into their farmland has destroyed crops in an area of over 300 acres in the

village and surrounding areas.

The residents of the Panchayat alleged that though they took up the matter with the local administration on several occasions, their grievances were not heard. The villagers of Trilochanpur also organised a Gram Sabha to discuss the matter. Meanwhile, when informed about the farmer's plight, the Tehsildar at Ersama said that officials from the local administration would soon visit the village

for ground inspection. "A white layer has formed on the water due to which the paddy plants are gradually getting rotten. The water has even turned black due to the chemical discharge from the IOCL refinery," alleged Dhananjay Behera, a villager of Trilochanpur.

"A thick layer of oil has formed over the water due to which fish and other aquatic animals have been dying. The water has damaged the crops and causing skin problems in the villagers," alleged

another resident of Trilochanpur village.

The villagers have also threatened to launch an agitation if the problem is not resolved at the earliest and compensation is not paid to them for the losses they have incurred. Refuting the allegation, IOCL authorities claimed that no such wastewater was released into farmlands. "Following allegation of the villagers, officials from the Health Safety and Environment department of the IOCL visited the refinery and conducted an investigation. No water is being discharged from the plant to the farmland. Wastewater discharge is stored in an oxidation pond which is then purified. 75 to 80 per cent of the treated water is re-used by the refinery, while the rest 20 to 25 per cent is released into the deep sea. No wastewater is mixing with farmlands," said the Public Relations Officer of IOCL, Sudhansu Sekhar Patra.

From Page-1

CM Naveen Patnaik ...

Meanwhile, at a function in Titlagarh, CM Naveen distributed the BSKY smart health cards and dedicated various developmental projects to the people. Thereafter the CM visited Patnagarh and distributed the BSKY health cards to some beneficiaries. He also laid the foundation stones for various developmental projects.

In all, the CM inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 128 welfare projects which will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 827 crore. It may be recalled that the smart health card scheme was launched by the CM at Malkangiri on August 20 and later at Sundergarh on September 14. The smart health cards will be provided to 3.5 crore people of 96 lakh families in the State. Each family can avail treatment up to Rs 5 lakh per annum through the card while women beneficiaries can avail benefits up to Rs 10 lakh every year under the scheme.

Tata Steel concludes...

and another unused area by converting it into parks, gardens, and rainwater harvesting structures. The process is certified to International Standards i.e ISO-9001, ISO-14001, and OHSAS-18001 & SA-8000. The company further promises GRI reporting, Energy Audit conducted & Sustainability reports published every year.

Sidhu resigns...

resigned from his post on Tuesday. Sidhu sent his resignation letter to party chief Sonia Gandhi in which he said that he will continue to serve the Congress.

"The collapse of a man's character stems from the compromise corner; I can never compromise on Punjab's future and the agenda for the welfare of Punjab. Therefore, I hereby resign as the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee," Sidhu said in his letter sent to Gandhi.

He, however, did not explain about the "compromise" part mentioned in the letter.

Sidhu's term remained a pretty short one - he was appointed as Punjab Congress chief on July 23 after months of months of feud with Amarinder Singh, who eventually resigned as the state's chief minister.

People familiar with the matter in the Congress said that Sidhu is disappointed that he wasn't named the chief minister after Singh. It is learnt that he did not meet the Gandhis before taking the decision to quit the post.

The feud between Singh and Sidhu started in 2019 and escalated this year. The decision to elevate Sidhu as the chief of the party's state unit was taken by the Congress high command in a bid to end infighting ahead of the assembly elections next year, but the resignation today has proved that the political turmoil in Punjab is far from over.

Captain Amarinder Singh ...

alliance at the Centre. However, there is no official confirmation around it and these are just speculations at the moment.

Captain Amarinder Singh had resigned as the chief minister of Punjab following months of infighting between him and Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) chief Navjot Singh Sidhu.

Speaking to reporters shortly after resigning as chief minister, Amarinder Singh said he felt "humiliated" at the manner in which he was treated by the Congress high command. Captain Amarinder Singh had even called Navjot Singh Sidhu "incompetent" and "anti-national". Asked if he would endorse Sidhu as his successor, Amarinder Singh had then that he would oppose such a proposition "tooth and nail". Singh added that he was still a member of the Congress party. All these development came just four months ahead of assembly elections in Punjab.

The Congress central leadership later appointed Charanjit Singh Chani as the new Chief Minister of Punjab.

JSPL to start mining at Kasia mine within a month: MD V R Sharma

Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) aims to start mining at Kasia iron ore block within a month, its Managing Director V R Sharma said.

The integrated steelmaker on Thursday announced bagging of the block, which has total reserves of 278 million tonnes (MT).

Speaking with PTI, Sharma elaborated on the company's plans with respect to starting operations at the Kasia iron ore mine, located about 17 km from JSPL's pellet plant in Barbil. "It is already an operational mine, we can start mining within a month once all statutory approvals are there," the MD said.

He said JSPL will also put up a slurry pipeline from the pithead to its steel plant in Angul. This will help the company with 5-6 million tonnes of iron ore per year.

The e-auction for the Kasia iron and dolomite mineral block was held on September 18, 2021. It was earlier owned and operated by Essel Mining and Industries.

JSPL has been declared as the preferred bidder for the mine at a premium of 118.10 per cent. The mine has a huge resource of 278 MT of iron ore with an average



iron grade of about 62.5 per cent.

This large and high-quality captive iron ore mine provides significant raw material security to JSPL. JSPL, an O.P. Jindal Group firm, has a significant presence in the steel, power and mining sectors with investments worth Rs 90,000 crore across the globe.

Odisha Poorest In Country, 46% Farmers Debt-Ridden



Sirish C. Mohanty

The NSSO Report All India Debt and Investment Survey 2019 has disproved the rosy picture of Odisha's growing per capita income. The condition of farmer households seems very wretched in the State.

Odisha's economy is agro-based. Over 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture. Over the period governments have tried to shift the thrust of the economy to industries and mining but couldn't achieve any tangible results. The legendary leader Biju Patnaik tried many times to industrialise the state but failed. Finally, in the last year of his tenure, he realised the truth and shifted his attention to the rural economy and agriculture. But he couldn't return to power in the 1995 elections. Congress during its tenure from 1995 to 2000 committed the same mistake of shifting the thrust to industrialisation. BJD led by Naveen Patnaik came in 2000 but didn't carry forward the half-left job of his father. Agriculture and farmers continued to be neglected. The government did

not appropriately focus on irrigation. Cooperative societies created to assist the farmers were gradually defuncted without the patronage of the government. Farmers to meet their crop finance turned to money lenders at an exorbitant rate of interest that varies from 30 to 50 percent. Finally, on crop failure or any other eventualities; takes the extreme step of suicide. The state government tries to cover up, but the truth will always prevail.

In the Gini's Coefficient of State-level asset distribution and rank of State by average asset value, Odisha has been ranked at the bottom - both rural and urban. The state ranked 36. The debt to asset ratio (DAR) of farmer households in Odisha is at a high-risk level. The DAR in Odisha is estimated at 5.5. The DAR value of farmer suicide-prone states is also high.

Even as the Odisha Government has been claiming of bringing in rapid economic growth and a consequent rise in per capita income of the people in the State, the All India Debt and

Investment Survey by National Sample Survey Organisation seems to have pricked the much-touted rapid growth bubble.

The big bombshell dropped is, Odisha finished as the poorest state in the country. In the indicator of the average value of assets (AVA) per household, both the urban and rural, Odisha holds the lowest asset value at hand in the country.

As per the NSSO report, the average asset value (AVA) at hand per household in rural Odisha has been mere Rs 5.32 lakh. The figure in urban Odisha has been estimated at 13.41 lakh. The rural household in Odisha is the poorest in the country. Rural Assam has an AVA of nearly 7 lakh.

In the neighbourhood, Odisha ranked the poorest. Jharkhand rural household's AVA is Rs 8.6 lakh, whereas rural Chhattisgarh has an AVA of Rs 8.9 lakh. In West Bengal, the rural AVA is Rs 7.89 lakh.

Seems interesting here is when Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have a continuous face-off over Kotia

and similar such villages, and reports say rural dweller in the villages has developed a fascination for the neighbouring state. The rural household in Andhra Pradesh emerges as the 11th richest among the major 18 states.

The NSS report reveals that rural Odisha AVA per household is less than half of the national average. The AVA per household in urban Odisha is also over 40 percent less than the national average, and Odisha finishes at the bottom. In the Gini's Coefficient of State-level asset distribution and rank of State by average asset value, Odisha has been ranked at the bottom - both rural and urban.

Notwithstanding the much-touted KALIA Yojana, Odisha has been ranked among the 10 states, where maximum farmer households have a high incidence of debt (IOD). Hence the KALIA plan appears to have in no way helpful to make the farmer free of debts or can make the farmers self-sufficient. Except luring beneficiaries to be attached with, the scheme doesn't play any role in the upliftment of farmers of the state. Moreover, the State Government's claim that farmer's per capita income in Odisha high seems to have fallen flat, as the NSSO report ranked Odisha farmer households AVA as the poorest in the country.

As per the report, the average value of asset per cultivator household in Odisha has been

estimated at only Rs 6.21 lakh. And a massive 46.4 percent of households live with debt over their heads. In the ranking of Incidence of Debt among cultivator households, Odisha has been ranked 9th in the country. Only 24 per farmer households have taken debt from institutional sources like banks and other financial institutions.

For over the years, the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government has debunked the reports of farmer suicides in the State. Even the 2019 NCRB report had manufactured nil suicides by farmers in the State.

The NSS report recently released puts the debt to asset ratio (DAR) of farmer households in Odisha at a high-risk level. The DAR in Odisha is estimated at 5.5. A whopping 45 percent of farmer households have cash debt that carries an interest rate of as high as 30-50 percent.

A glance at the farmer's suicide-prone states reveals big. The DAR is high there. In Andhra Pradesh, the DAR is 8.7. It is 5.7 in Telangana and 7.4 in Kerala.

High DAR shows that the asset is mostly funded by debt. Since the DAR is such high, it hints that the household will default on the loans taken at times with high-interest rates. In case, they meet some eventualities like crop loss due to floods, drought, pest attack, and high-interest burden. It is this fear of default that forces the farmers to take the extreme step of suicide.

Died A Hero: R.I.P. Arindam Das

Arindam Das' untimely demise has left the media fraternity and senior leaders in deep shock. Arindam Das was a journalist who loved challenges. His reportage in adverse situations created his own brand of journalism.

Be it flood, cyclones, crime, or covering left-wing extremism, Arindam's

versatility made him unique. He never stuck to stereotypes and always thought out of the box to report events.

Arindam's love for challenges & respect for duty was reflected in his childhood wish to join the armed forces. He was a part of the NCC Republic Day contingent in



New Delhi.

He was also interested to join the Territorial Army. As a journalist, he always thrived to bring news to the people no matter what the circumstances were. And for that his contribution to journalism in Odisha, he will always be remembered.

May his soul rest in peace!

Joda Tribals eat Iron dust while miners cheer profit



Sirish C. Mohanty

There is no emergency need for iron ore in the state as the existing industries already have captive mines to produce steel. Tata steel has also gone for the public hearing to enhance production to over 17 million tones to cater to its need of raw material for its Kalinganagar steel plant and Jamshedpur steelworks at Jamshedpur in Jharkhand. Surprisingly, there is no plan to increase employment to match the enhancement of production. So, why there is such a hurry for more auctions and enhancements of productions if these are not solving the acute unemployment problems the state faces? The only consequence will be to destroy the valuable forests of the state which will take at least 500 years to replenish if destroyed now? Shouldn't we preserve the minerals for future generations through responsible mining?

Odisha is among the

The Odisha government on September 9, announced, after a meeting with the union minister of mines, that it is preparing to auction five more mines in the next two months.

In July 2021, the Odisha government issued a notice inviting tenders for the auction of 11 mines (seven fresh blocks and four lease renewals) in the state. The activists claim that the seven new mines are expected to result in the loss of 4,000 acres of forest land.

The move for opening untouched forest areas for mining by the state government has, however, led to environmental activists expressing fear about an impending 'ecological disaster' in the state. They claim that even as a proper impact assessment of the mining projects is yet to be carried out, preliminary analysis suggests that the mining activity will severely impact the flora and fauna of these areas. The activists claim that close to 4,000 acres of forest land in the state, mostly in the Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts, will be destroyed due to the auction of these seven fresh mines. However, there is no official estimate as yet.

In Keonjhar's Gandhalpada

than sixty-fold, yet 46 percent of families in the state live below the poverty line, earning less than Rs 15,100 in a year. Seventy-three percent of Adivasis and 53 percent of Dalits in the state live below the poverty line. During the last ten years, over 80 percent of tribal mining workers have lost

in every state that will act as a welfare fund, to be used for the development of people and regions affected by the mining operation. It mentioned that the high priority areas of spending will be drinking water supply, healthcare, environmental protection, education, the welfare of women and children

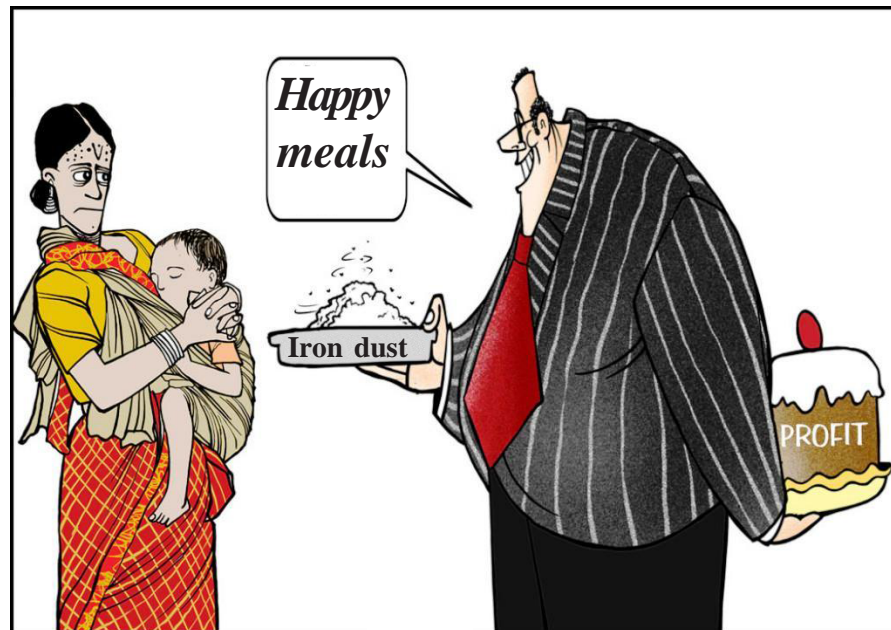
airport from the DMF funds. Sundargarh district administration has also purchased 25 police patrolling vehicles and constructed boundary walls of the circuit house using DMF in the past.

DMF fund of Keonjhar district was utilized to create a patient facilitation center in

Bada Kalimati, and Bamberi have claimed that the frequency of transportation of minerals has increased. The condition of the KIDCO road from Palaspanga to Bamberi which has been bad even before the lockdown has turned deplorable now. The transportation goes on for 24 hours a day - even during the curfew hours and the strict weekend lockdowns. While the communities have been suffering the economic and social impacts of the COVID 19 lockdown, it has made no difference to the miners and the mineral transporters whatsoever.

There are traffic jams throughout the road for hours. This has limited the communities' access to basic healthcare services as the ambulances get stuck in long traffic jams, even as the COVID-19 health emergency has made the importance of a strong public healthcare system very clear to the rest of the world. People residing along these transportation routes have very unwillingly accepted road accidents to be a part of their life now.

The roads of the mining towns of Joda remain deplorable. Every day accidents take lives. The people of the Joda mining area suffer because of the air pollution primarily generated by the reckless mineral transport on a so-called road forenamed as Bijupatanik highway. There is a CHC at Kamarjoda in Joda built 30 years back, but it is yet to be fully functional and remains inaccessible because the road connecting to it is not usable either by walking, by two-wheelers, or four-wheelers. The hospital runs on the funds of the DMF. Are the people of Joda not entitled to get a CHC from the health departments as other areas of the state are entitled to? The most deplorable point is the manner the DMF funds are used for the hospital; for example- without an operation theatre a doctor for anesthesia is appointed! What a joke, is it not.



their jobs, yet the government remains blind and deaf to them.

The National Mineral Policy 2019 defines minerals as shared inheritance by citizens of a state and mentions that the

among others.

The collection of the fund would be 10 percent of royalty from auctioned mines (leases granted on or after 12.01.2015) and 30 percent of royalty from mines allocated before 12.01.2015. Odisha has collected the highest amount in the entire country in its District Mineral Foundation, almost 12 billion rupees. However, the areas of spending of DMF are extremely problematic.

Misuse of DMF

The Odisha Cabinet recently approved Rs 266 crores to be taken from DMF Sundergarh for the construction of an international hockey stadium in Rourkela ahead of the Men's Hockey World Cup in 2023. A recreational facility that would cost Rs 30.42 crore (funded from the DMF) and would have a musical fountain, amphitheater, jogging track, children's play area, gazebo, cluster sitting, etc, is being built in Sundergarh as well.

Previously, in the Jharsuguda district, the district administration sanctioned works related to the power supply for the Jharsuguda

Cuttack, handball stadiums, and playgrounds. In Sukinda, they are using Rs 10 crores to grow guava trees over 500 acres of land even as a proper road remains to be built for the connectivity of Nagada village, where the hunger deaths happened in 2017.

Tribals, Pandemic and the lockdown.

The nationwide lockdown in April had left the affected people with no grievance-redressal mechanism as government offices like the Pollution Control Board (PCB) was functioning remotely and the district administration was engaged with the pandemic control.

This had forced people to come out of their homes and protest, and make their voices heard. However, the journey from Lockdown 1 to Unlock 1 has not changed much for the people of Joda. Their complaint letters and repeated phone calls to the PCB have not yielded any response till now.

Since the beginning of the nationwide lockdown given the pandemic, the people of Joda,



mineral-rich states of the country and is a leader in the production of minerals like iron ore, bauxite, coal. According to Odisha's Economic Survey 2020-21, the state contributed 34.3 percent of the total mineral production in the country. Overall, the mining sector plays a crucial role in the state's economy, and similar to the central government, the state government is also pinning hopes on mining to revive the economy after COVID-19.

forest (iron ore reserve) alone, almost 900,000 trees will have to be felled to carry out the mining activity. Of those, almost 73 percent are sal trees, which take 150 years to mature. Similarly, activists claim the mining activity in the Karlapat area is expected to impact more than 300 perennial streams and elephant corridors in the area.

Rich Lands, Poor People

Since independence, the annual production of minerals in Odisha has increased more

government is only a trustee on behalf of the people. This means governments don't own mines. Exploration companies (PSUs or private) don't own mines. People own mines. Why then, are the Adivasis turned into starving, diseased, daily wage laborers on the mines discovered under their very own lands?

The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act in 2015, directed that a District Mineral Foundation (DMF) be formed

Odisha's Rural Debt Burden Up 127%, Urban Down By 54% In 6-Yrs

As per SBI report, in the pandemic backdrop, the rural debt is projected to more than double nationally. Coincidentally, debt-enriched rural Odisha had been third in country where rural caseload was around 80 percent

Even as the Naveen Patnaik led BJD government's pet slogan has been 'Ama Gaon, Ama Bikash', and moreover when Rs 1200-1500 cr annual allocation was being made for rural development, the shocker is the average debt burden per household in rural Odisha had grown by a whopping 127 per cent.

The heights of rural distress in Odisha is evidenced by the fact that 43 per cent share of cash debt has been from the 'sahukars' (money lenders), not banks. What looks worrying is the share in 1981 was only 19 per cent.

The comparative numbers show rural Odisha now is borrowing more from sahukars than banks. As the interest rate quoted by sahukars were being astronomically high, the vicious cycle of debt burden may sink rural Odisha. And the outcome could be devastating, feel experts.

As per SBI research, based on NSSO's All India Survey on Debt and Investment 2019, the average amount of debt per rural household in Odisha in 2012 was Rs 14,000. However, as per the NSSO report, the amount in 2018 clocked a 127 per cent rise to touch Rs 31000.

Odisha Vs Neighbours

While the rate of growth in the average amount of debt per rural household in Andhra Pradesh was 118 per cent between 2012 and 2018, the growth in Chhattisgarh had been mere 28 percent.

Similarly, when the growth rate had been 60 per cent in rural West Bengal, the rate in Jharkhand was 56 percent.

The above comparative number-crunching shows the extent of rural distress is higher in Odisha vis-a-vis the neighbouring states.

Rural Penury Vs Urban Luxury



Rural poverty In Odisha

As per the SBI analysis, the urban households in Odisha have grown richer, whereas rural counterparts had turned debtors.

"In urban Odisha, the average amount of debt per household had nosedived by 54 percent to touch Rs 53000 from Rs 1.16 lakh in 2012. Odisha is the only state to record such a steep drop in average debt amount per household," the data reveals.

But the same story of affluence is not registered in

rural Odisha. The debt amount here has more than doubled.

Similarly, as per the SBI analysis, when the DAR (Debt to Assets Ratio) per household in Odisha was up by 95 per cent between 2012 and 2018, in urban Odisha the ratio had tumbled by 1070 percent.

Odisha is the only State to record this north-south pole divide between the rural and urban households in the indices of financial conditions.

The above comparison clearly outlines the lack of equitable growth in Odisha. While urban Odisha has been recording a decline in debt burden, deterioration has been observed in the rural regions.

The point to note here is 83.3 percent population in the State dwells in rural regions, only 17 percent inhabit urban areas.

SBI On Debt 2021 Amid Pandemic

"As per the AIDIS report 2018, the average amount of debt among rural households is at Rs 59,748 and in urban households is Rs 1.20 lakh. We estimated the 2021 rural & urban HH debt to track the impact of COVID-19 on the households. In 2021 the rural HH debt is expected to increase to Rs 1.16 lakh and urban to Rs 2.33 lakh, indicating that COVID impacted the households significantly,"

observed SBI chief economic adviser Soumyakanti Ghosh.

Odisha Impact

When in a normal year the State had recorded a sharp rise in indebtedness, going by the SBI report, the distress in rural Odisha would have touched rock bottom in 2021. This is not a mere surmise.

A detailed glance at an earlier SBI report shows that the rural districts in Odisha took a pie of 79.6 per cent of the State's daily caseload to occupy the 3rd spot in the country, after Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

Moreover, the report finds that among the top 3-states, Odisha is the only state that showed a maximum rise in its rural districts vis-a-vis the cases in the first wave.

A look at the overall scenario of debt and pandemic clearly hints that rural distress in Odisha has become more acute in the pandemic times.

Pradipta Mohapatra Proceeds On Leave; R K Sharma To Officiate



Bhubaneswar, September 16: Additional Chief Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra proceeding on leave amid the ongoing fight against COVID resurgence in Odisha has triggered discussions in different circles, with speculation rife that he was asked to do the same by the

powers that be.

Agriculture Production Commissioner Raj Kumar Sharma has been made Secretary (in-charge) of the Health and Family Welfare department, official sources said.

While some believe Mohapatra's has taken leave due to the pressure following Orissa High Court expressing

dissatisfaction over the affidavit filed by the health department on COVID deaths in the state, some others think he took leave due to personal reasons.

There is also speculation in administrative circles that those calling the shots in the government asked Mohapatra to proceed on 28 days leave, following certain 'differences'. Mohapatra could not be contacted for comments.

The General Administration & Public Grievance Department, however, said that he was granted EL from September 14 to October 11 on personal grounds.

On September 8, the High Court termed the

department's affidavit filed as 'inadequate'. "The manner in which the death statistic was arrived at and the period covered is not clear," the division bench of Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice BP Routray observed.

The Health Secretary was asked to clarify as to whether the death position submitted relates to the entire period of the pandemic and file a detailed supplementary affidavit by October 4.

The government had stated that the reporting of COVID deaths slowed down during May, June and July when the cases were soaring, and doctors in the hospitals were busy saving the lives of patients. The 4,925 deaths

as of July 15 is the number of updated scrutinised data pending the final decision. After the severity of the pandemic declined significantly during the second half of July and August, the scrutiny of all the backlog records of the patients who died was expedited to find the primary cause of death. The COVID-19 deaths were ascertained to be 8,022 in the state till August 30, the affidavit added.

The next hearing is on October 7.

A 1988-batch IAS officer, Mohapatra replaced Nikunja Bihari Dhal amid growing 'discomfort' in the government over the

management of the pandemic, in May 2020.

"Appointment of an ACS rank officer was necessary in view of the massive coordination works required in the next few days as lakhs of Odia migrant workers, students, professionals, stranded pilgrims and patients would travel back to Odisha from affected states," the state administration said.

Mohapatra was tasked to coordinate with the Centre and push through relief measures in the state while monitoring the COVID-19 situation and strategising ways to plug the spread of the deadly virus.

The future of global tech



Following their first in-person summit in Washington, Quad countries - Australia, India, Japan and the United States (US) - announced a set of principles

that will guide how they design, develop, govern and use technology

Following their first in-person summit in Washington, Quad countries

- Australia, India, Japan and the United States (US) - announced a set of principles that will guide how they design, develop, govern and use technology. These

broadly rest on three pillars - technologies should support democratic values; build trust, integrity and resilience; and foster competition and collaboration that drive advances in science and technology. The direction that Quad countries take will have a significant bearing on the future of technology. A key driver of Quad is balancing China's influence on global security and economy, and the future of technology sits at the heart of both.

In this context, the principles outlined reflect a significant commitment to a counter-China approach. Take, for example, the stress on values: Technology should be designed, governed and used to promote "shared values of autonomy, agency and dignity of individuals". This contradicts some of the principles China has embraced. It has a sprawling

deployment of digital tools that help keep a strong check on the activities of its people. In 2019, the US blacklisted several Chinese companies for furthering China's "campaign of repression, mass arbitrary detention, and high-technology surveillance" in the Xinjiang region. In fact, the principles explicitly condemn the misuse of technology for "malicious activities such as authoritarian surveillance and oppression, for terrorist purposes or to disseminate disinformation". This is a message to autocracies, but it is also a message to democracies to live by their own ideals.

A second core area of focus relates to how the Quad countries envision the future of their tech industries. Technology ecosystems must be built with "trust, integrity and resilience". Again, the China backdrop is

conspicuous. In recent years, all Quad partners have blacklisted Chinese hardware giants such as Huawei over concerns that they could open security backdoors for China. Quad also aims to reorient the semiconductor supply-chain dominated by Beijing. All four Quad partners are well positioned to make a meaningful pivot if they address this overreliance. Crucially, India will stand to gain as it attempts to become an alternative to the powerhouse of the tech industry that China has become. But for that to happen, India's commitment to the principles will be under close scrutiny. In the short-term, this could have a bearing on how India approaches regulation of big tech which, for a while now, appears to be on a collision course with the Global North's light touch policies. 

Auction Of Virgin Karlapat Bauxite Block In Odisha Put On Hold

Bhubaneswar, Sep 22: The auction of Karlapat iron ore and bauxite block has been put on hold. The Directorate of Mines on Tuesday said that this has been done in compliance with the September 9 interim order of the Orissa High court.

A source had earlier told that the auction of the first bauxite mineral block will be held as scheduled unless a specific instruction is received from the HC, where a petition has been filed by an Odisha-based mining contractor.

Karlapat was among the 11 mineral blocks, including seven virgin mines, put up for auction by the Odisha government for which the bidding process began on Saturday. Incidentally, Karlapat bauxite block lies near the Karlapat Sanctuary, a designated elephant corridor in the Kalahandi district, and is considered ecologically very sensitive.

In a letter to Chief



Minister Naveen Patnaik, environmentalist Prafulla Samantra had earlier said that mining the Karlapat bauxite block would dry up 300 large and small streams in the sanctuary. "Not just the wildlife but even tribes and indigenous people living close to the forest and dependent on the resources will be adversely affected," he said.

Mineral Blocks

Of the blocks up for grabs, seven are iron ore blocks, two composite blocks of iron ore and manganese, one composite block of iron ore and dolomite


and a bauxite block. Except for Nadidih (Bico), whose lease period expired before March 31, 2020, six blocks of Purheibahal, Chandiposhi, Jumka Pathriposhi Pahar, Dholtapahar, Netrabandha Pahar (West) and Gandhalpada are greenfield mines.

The other four are Kasia, having both iron ore and dolomite, Nadidih (Feegrade) and Teherai, which are composite iron ore and manganese blocks, and Karlapat, a bauxite mineral block.

THE AUCTION

On Saturday, Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) bagged the Kasia iron ore at a premium of 118.1 per cent. Seven companies were in the race for this mining block, spread over 194.19 hectare with geological resources of 278.04 million tonne of iron ore (having an average Fe grade of 63.2 pc) and 0.693 mt of dolomite ore.

The second day of the mines auction in Odisha saw ESL Steel Ltd winning Nadidih iron ore block BICO in Sundargarh district by committing to pay a premium of 95.6 per cent. The mineral block, spread over 73.85 hectares, is one of the oldest in Koira mining sector.

Odisha has received 123 bids for the 11 mineral deposits. Jindal Steel and Power Limited, Adani, JSW, Tata Steel, ArcelorMittal, Essel Mining and Industries Limited, Rungta Mines Ltd, MSPL, Vedanta and NMDC are in the race, sources said. 

JSPL bags Kasia iron ore & dolomite mines

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) bagged the Kasia iron ore & dolomite block at 118% premium.


The Kasia iron ore mine was earlier operated by Aditya Birla Group owned Essel Mining.

spread over 194.19 hectares.

The financial bidding for 11 mineral blocks has started from Saturday. Total 123 bids have been received by the state for the 11 mineral deposits. The blocks which are up for



According to sources, as many as 13 companies had submitted bids for the Kasia block while seven companies cleared the technical bidding round and participated in the financial bidding for the block,

grabs in the auction process include Kasia, Nadidih (Bico), Nadidih (Feegrade), Teherai, Pureibahal, Chandiposhi, Jumka, Dholtapahar, Netrabandha Pahar (West), Gandhalpada and Karlapat. 

After Erdogan mentions Kashmir in UNGA, Jaishankar says important to respect UN resolutions on Cyprus



S Jaishankar emphasised the need to adhere to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions in respect to Cyprus,

Washington, Sep 23: Hours after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made a reference to Kashmir in his address to the UN General Assembly, external affairs minister S Jaishankar emphasised the need to adhere to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions in respect to Cyprus.

"Important that relevant

UN Security Council resolutions in respect of Cyprus are adhered to by all," Jaishankar tweeted after a meeting with Nikos Christodoulides, the foreign minister of the Republic of Cyprus, on the sidelines of the UN general assembly's general debate that kicked off Tuesday.

Jaishankar, who arrived in New York on Monday to

participate in the high-level 76th session of the UN General Assembly, has held at least 18 bilateral meetings with counterparts from various countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Egypt, Norway, South Korea and Vietnam. On Wednesday, he was also scheduled to attend a meeting of the G-20 foreign ministers on Afghanistan and of the G-4, which is seeking permanent seats for India, Brazil, Japan and Germany on the UNSC.

Jaishankar met his South Korean counterpart Chung Eui-Yong and had wide-ranging conversations on different aspects of the bilateral relationships, including Southern Policy and India's Act East Policy. "Pleased to meet FM Chung Eui-Yong of the Republic of Korea. A wide-ranging conversation on different aspects of our relationship. RoK's New Southern Policy and India's Act East Policy have strengthened our

convergence in the Indo-Pacific," tweeted Jaishankar.

While interacting with his Italian counterpart Luigi Di Maio, who is the current G20 chair, Jaishankar discussed challenges related to vaccine accessibility and smooth travel. "Discussed challenges related to vaccine accessibility and smooth travel. Look forward to joining him at a discussion on Afghanistan tomorrow," he tweeted.

The Union minister also met with his Finnish counterpart Pekka Haavisto and discussed the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Jaishankar held a discussion on the Indo-Pacific issues during his meeting with his Chilean counterpart Andres Allamand. "Another perspective on the Indo-Pacific from FM @allamand of Chile. Also engaged on expanding our economic engagement, including on green energy," he tweeted.

Earlier, in his address to

the General Debate on Tuesday, Erdogan had said, "We maintain our stance in favour of solving the ongoing problem in Kashmir for 74 years, through dialogue between the parties and within the framework of relevant United Nations resolutions."

Erdogan had raised Kashmir in his address also in 2019, which was the last in-person meeting of the UN general assembly. At that time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had reiterated India's support for "independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity" of island nation after a meeting with Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades. Cyprus backs India's claims to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

The long ongoing conflict in Cyprus began in 1974 when Turkey invaded the northern part of the country in response to a military coup on the island which was

backed by the Greek government. India has been advocating a peaceful resolution of the issue in accordance with the UN resolutions.

In a 1998 resolution, the UN Security Council called upon "all States to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and request(ed) them, along with the parties concerned, to refrain from any action which might prejudice that sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as from any attempt of partition of the island or its unification with any other country".

The UNSC resolution also called for the "all concerned to commit themselves to a reduction in defence spending and a reduction in the number of foreign troops in the Republic of Cyprus to help restore confidence between the parties and as a first step towards the withdrawal of non-Cypriot forces".

Punjab Fire Spreads to Rajasthan, Some Push for Sachin Pilot's Take off

Jaipur, Sept 20: Speaking to media on the demand of change of guards in Rajasthan, Sharma, who is believed to be in Pilot's faction, said, "There should be a leadership change in Rajasthan too. The Congress government was formed in Rajasthan on the basis of Pilot's hard work, in such a situation, the high command should make Pilot the Chief Minister of Rajasthan. If Pilot is made the CM, then there will be benefit in the upcoming elections as well."

In Rajasthan, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has been evading the high command's decision to adjust Sachin Pilot camp and in Chhattisgarh, Bhupesh Baghel rallied more than 50 MLAs to Delhi to show his strength. The Congress leadership is miffed with state of affairs in both the states with Chief Ministers defying Congress leadership decisions.

With Punjab operation, the Congress has given tough message to the other Chief Ministers as well.

Congress General Secretary in-charge of Rajasthan Ajay Maken on Thursday had said that roadmap is ready for cabinet expansion and organisational rejig in the state. "If Ashok Gehlot had not fallen ill we would have done cabinet expansion and the roadmap is ready for appointment at board corporations and district presidents," Maken had said at a press conference in Delhi on Thursday.

The Congress leader said that Gehlot is still unwell and doing his work from home and as he gets well this will be done. When asked about Sachin Pilot, he said, "At the state level, we are discussing all issues but if something is given at the AICC level its beyond my purview."

NCW chief demands Channi's resignation as Punjab CM

Delhi, September 20: The National Commission for Women or NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma has demanded the resignation of Charanjit Singh Channi, who on Monday took oath as the 16th chief minister of Punjab, over allegations of sexual harassment against him. Calling Channi's appointment to be "shameful", Sharma said the new chief minister needs to be held "accountable and should resign from the post."

"We do not want another woman to go through the same experience and endure the same harassment that the IAS officer would have faced," the NCW chief added.

The Indian Administrative Service officer accused Channi of sending inappropriate texts to her, but no formal complaint was registered and the issue was resolved

following intervention by the former chief minister of Punjab Captain Amarinder Singh. However, the case was reopened in June this year after Punjab Women Commission chairperson Manisha Gulati sought a reply from the Punjab government. This move became an issue within the state Congress circles with ministers supporting Channi calling it a 'witch hunt' by the Captain camp.

After Channi's appointment, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) IT cell head mockingly said "well done, Rahul" to address Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. He referred to the #Metoo allegations against Channi.

On Monday, Sharma said that she was shocked and "utterly disappointed" to find Channi being appointed to the top post of the state.



"One can only imagine what would be the state of women's safety in [Punjab] given the one at the helm of affairs is himself accused of threatening women security," she added.

The NCW chief also stated that if an IAS officer has been denied justice in the state, how can the ruling dispensation make sure that "common women" of Punjab would be safe. "Despite being a woman herself, the Congress chief (Sonia Gandhi) did not consider the

#Metoo allegations made against Channi and appointed him the CM," Sharma noted.

Earlier in the day, BJP's Punjab in-charge Dushyant Kumar Gautam took a jibe at the Congress party, saying that the only reason they picked Channi is that they want to win Dalit votes. Channi has become the first Dalit leader to be appointed as the chief minister of Punjab. Punjab will go into the polls in 2022.

Corrupt Babus Give Two Hoots To Odisha Vigilance, Conviction Chances 50-50



Even as the Odisha Vigilance claimed of registering 93 DA (disproportion assets) cases, including the high profile Abhay Pathak - Pradeep Panigrahi case, in the Covid-19 hit year, the big fact to fore is for the first time in Odisha's anti-corruption crusade history, the lowest ever cases were registered under the prevention of corruption act (PCA) in the State.

As per the NCRB report, Odisha Vigilance had registered only 245 cases in 2020. The earlier lowest tally was 285 cases in 2004.

Fear In Crooks?

A detailed glance at the data shows, the crooked babus in Odisha have only become a little alert. The data shows trap cases by Odisha Vigilance had posted a sharp slide in recent

years. The total trap cases in 2018 were 182. The tally in 2020 stood at 103.

But a rise in registration of DA cases tells the real story. After all why a Sarkari babu would fear the law, when data with the Vigilance for the period 2001-2020 shows that there is only a fifty per cent chance of getting convicted for looting public money.

In 2017, the conviction rate was 47 per cent. The rate in 2018 was 51 per cent. In 2019, the rate dropped again to 48.6 per cent. The rate limped back to 50 per cent in 2020.

The above data shows that for nearly half of the accused, there is a fair chance to achieve an acquittal in the court of law.

In contrast, the conviction

rate in Tamil Nadu improved from around 63 per cent in 2019 to nearly 72 per cent in 2020.

rate in Tamil Nadu improved from around 63 per cent in 2019 to nearly 72 per cent in 2020.

Why Jail Or Acquittal 50-50?

As per NCRB data, of every 100 corruption cases registered, only 2 reach the trial stage. And in any crime delay in a trial means a gateway to escape the noose.

Consider the data. Including pending cases from previous years, the total cases under investigation under PCA stood at 1738. The State Vigilance could file charge sheets in only 153 cases. The charge sheeting rate is just around 9 per cent (8.8%).

"Poor charge-sheeting rate indicates the vulnerability of prolonged or say delayed investigation,

which in a way lends a long rope to the accused (who are generally influential in power corridors) to tamper with and manage themselves wriggle out of the PCA mess with a clean slate. This is the reason behind a 50-50 chance of jail or acquittal," rued a former Vigilance DG.

Is Fight Against Corruption Serious?

"Real-time trials require vigilance courts in proportion to the cases filed, remarked a senior IPS officer. Moreover, for speedy investigation, the anti-graft body needs adequate manpower, which is grossly lacking in the State. And the decline in the number of PCA cases in the State for two consecutive years hints very big," quipped the senior officer.

Vigilance Arrests Electrical SDO in DA Case in Keonjhar

Keonjhar, Sep 22: Vigilance on Wednesday arrested Maheshwara Sethi, SDO (Electrical) of TPNODL in the district in a disproportionate assets case.

Vigilance officials conducted simultaneous raids on the properties of Sethi, SDO (Electrical), Meter Relay Testing of TP North Odisha Distribution Ltd (TPNODL) at five places in the district on Tuesday.

During the raids, Sethi was found in possession of two double-storey buildings in Keonjhar district, 4 plots including 3 in Keonjhar town and one plot at Ghatagaon, Keonjhar, 3 two-wheelers, bank deposits over Rs 24.63 Lakh, insurance deposits over Rs 24 lakh and other movable and immovable properties, totalling over Rs 2.57 crore.

After search, inventory and further enquiry, the assets of Sethi was found in possession of assets disproportionate to the known sources of income to the tune of Rs 2,13,22,084.

As Sethi could not account for the properties satisfactorily, Vigilance registered a case and arrested him. Later, he was forwarded to the Court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Keonjhar which remanded him to judicial custody till October 5.

Woman Cop Sentenced To 2 Years For Graft

Convict Budhuni Minz, a former sub-inspector of Mahila police station in Rourkela, is presently posted at the office of Superintendent of Police, Keonjhar.

Aspecial Vigilance court in Sundargarh on Saturday convicted a woman police officer in a 14-year-old bribery case and sentenced her to rigorous imprisonment for two years.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 on the convict, Budhuni Minz, a former sub-inspector of Mahila police station in Rourkela, who is presently posted at the office of Superintendent of Police, Keonjhar.

Failure to pay the fine will invite additional rigorous imprisonment for three months, the court said.

According to sources, Minz had been facing trial in the court of Sundargarh Special Judge in connection with a case filed against her at Sambalpur Vigilance police station in January, 2007.

She had allegedly received illegal gratification of Rs 5,000 from a person to facilitate the release of the latter's parents on bail.

The court of the special vigilance judge, Sundargarh pronounced the verdict today and sentenced her to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of one year and pay a fine of Rs 5,000 for the offence under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

She was also convicted under Sections 13(1)(d) punishable U/s 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of two years and to pay a fine of Rs 5,000.

In case of default, she will have to undergo further rigorous imprisonment for a period of three months. Both the sentences will run concurrently, the court ruled.

Saudi daily lauds India's industrial sector, 'Make in India' initiative

Riyadh [Saudi Arabia], September 20 : Saudi Gazette, an English-language daily, has lauded India's industrial sector, especially the 'Make in India' initiative which promotes manufacturing in India and has been a pushing factor for the country's economic growth.

The manufacturing sector continued to contribute to India's GDP growth and helped the country achieve its aim of becoming an 'Atmanirbhar' economy or self-reliant economy. Though India's industrial growth was hit by COVID-19 and resulted in negative growth, still the industrial sector contributed to the country's growth, reports Saudi Gazette.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data,

the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) in India got increased to 131.4 points in July 2021 as compared to 117.9 points last year.

In the annual meeting of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) which happened last month, the scope of the industry and manufacturing was highlighted in the meeting and efforts of the central government in promoting industries through reforms were discussed.

India's defence exports have jumped more than four times in the last seven years. In the last 7 years, the Country's defence exports have crossed INR 38,500 Crore. According to data provided during the monsoon session in Lok Sabha, India's



defence export stood at 1,940 crore rupees in 2014-15, which has increased to more than 8,434 crore rupees in 2020-21.

Along with the 'Make in India' initiative, India has also started with Production-Linked Incentive schemes to boost employment and exports. Also, the government has also

removed retrospective taxation, reports Saudi Gazette. Despite the pandemic, India has pushed itself towards self-reliance and making steady growth in the industry sector. The country also handled the COVID-19 outbreak and has touched milestones in vaccination.

India needs more big banks the size of largest lender SBI: Nirmala Sitharaman

India needs at least four or five banks of a size matching its biggest lender, the State Bank of India, to meet the growing needs of its economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday.



New Delhi, Sep 27: The rationale for merging banks even before the pandemic was to scale up to meet the new, changing and growing requirements of the economy, Sitharaman told an annual meeting of the Indian Banks' Association.

"The economy is shifting to a different plane altogether," Sitharaman said. "Even before the pandemic the driving force for amalgamation (of banks) was that India needs a lot more banks, but a lot more big banks."

She added, "Now all the more reason we would need four or five more SBIs in the country."

She did not give details. But the government has been consolidating state-run banks to combat the pandemic slowdown and create bigger and stronger banks while it also looks to sell its stakes in, and privatise, at least two state-run banks.

Last month, State Bank of India reported record first-quarter profit and bet on economic activity picking up to contain a spike in bad

loans, sending shares of the state-run bank to an all-time high.

Sitharaman commended banks that merged for having done so successfully during the pandemic without inconveniencing customers, but said banks' internal systems must be able to communicate with each other even on a regular basis.

"You cannot any more be in a digital silos," she added. "All of your systems should be speaking to one another."

Banks are less burdened today as cleaner books will

cut the government's burden in recapitalising them, she added.

Domestic banks have struggled to limit bad loans, especially in their retail portfolios, as the pandemic and resultant lockdowns hit economic activity and limited borrowers' ability to repay.

The recently formed National Asset Reconstruction Co and the Debt Restructuring Co will together be able to cull non-performing assets (NPAs) from the banking system, restructuring and selling them, Sitharaman added.

"This is not a bad bank. Because it is bank-driven and because it is driven with a sense of having to clear up quickly, you have given yourself this framework which is going to help in speedily disposing of them (NPAs) with responsibility," she said.

"It is a formulation which you gave yourselves and therefore which I think will work and will work speedily."

Sidhu bulldozing Punjab cabinet, Rawat building bridges with Pakistan: Chugh

Chandigarh, Sep 23: BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh today questioned if the new Punjab chief minister Charanjit Channi was being "bulldozed" by Punjab PCC president Navjot Sidhu.

In a statement here Chugh said the way Sidhu has been overbearingly guiding and accompanying the chief minister and the two deputy chief ministers was a clear indication of the AICC that Sidhu would be calling shots in Punjab and the rest of the cabinet would play second

president Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi if they had to make the chief minister and his deputies tools in the hands of Sidhu then why did the AICC high command not appoint Sidhu as a chief minister.

"The Congress has heaped an insult of the people of Punjab by making this kind of an arrangement for the government to run", he said.

Chugh also lambasted Harish Rawat, the Congress observer for Punjab, for saying that Pakistan Army chief Gen Bajwa was his "Punjabi Bhai".



fiddle to him.

Chugh said he was surprised at the manner the chief minister and the two deputy chief ministers were being made to play a subservient role under his overbearing presence.

Chugh asked AICC

If this is the kind of anti-national sentiment the Congress is going to spread in Punjab the BJP would oppose it tooth and nail and expose the anti-national designs of the Congress in Punjab", Chugh added.

Pakistan: Hindu Family Tortured, Held Hostage For Taking Water From Mosque Tap

Lahore, Sept 20: Farm workers from a Hindu family in Pakistan's Rahim Yar Khan, city have landed in trouble for taking water from a mosque tap, according to a media report.

Some village landlords tortured and held them hostage for "violating the sanctity" of the place, Dawn news reported.

The incident took place a few days ago in Rahim Yar Khan when Alam Ram Bheel, a resident of Basti Kahoor Khan in the city suburbs, was

picking raw cotton along with his other family members, including his wife, in a field.

When the family went outside a nearby mosque to fetch drinking water from a tap, some local landlords and their men beat them.

When the family was returning home after unloading the picked cotton, the landlords held them hostage at their 'dera' (outhouse) and tortured them again, the Dawn news report said.

Later, some Muslim residents of Basti Kahoor



Khan got the Bheel family released.

Ram Bheel said the

Airport police station did not register the case as the attackers were related to a local

parliamentarian of the ruling PTI. Ram said he held a sit-in outside the police station, along with another clan member Peter Jhon Bheel to protest the high-handedness, the report said.

Also a member of the district peace committee, Peter Jhon Bheel told Dawn news that they approached PTI MNA Javed Warriach who helped them lodge the FIR.

Jhon said he requested other members of the district peace committee to call an emergency meeting over the

issue but they did not take him seriously.

PTI's south Punjab minority wing secretary general Yodhister Chohan told Dawn news that the incident was in his knowledge but due to the influence of a ruling party MP he preferred to stay away.

District Police Officer Asad Sarfraz said that he was looking into the matter.

This news has been published via a Syndicated feed. Only the headline is changed.

PM Modi vs Imran Khan

India and Pakistani PMs' UNGA address: A study in contrast



Since Pakistan has always used the United Nations General Assembly forum to spew vitriol against India and so no one was surprised when Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan named India more than a dozen times in his pre-recorded speech aired at the 76th session of UNGA. Neither did the allegations levelled by Khan against India arouse much interest as it was the same old story—that the present government in New Delhi was "fascist"; it was propagating "hate-filled

Hindutva ideology [that] has unleashed a reign of fear and violence against India's 200 million-strong Muslim community" and responsible for "gross and systematic violations of human rights."

As was expected, he dwelt at length on Kashmir. He brought up the issue of Article 370 abrogation once again, calling it "illegal", but since he failed to quote any legal clauses to substantiate his allegation, his claim found no resonance within the international community and

even the media. He also spoke about what he referred to as "gross and systematic violations of human rights" by Indian security forces in Kashmir and cited the dossier containing details of such incidents that Pakistan had circulated. However, since Khan did not substantiate his litany of allegations with any credible evidence, neither the international community nor the media took serious note of the same.

In sharp contrast to Khan's tirade, his Indian

counterpart Narendra Modi didn't even mention Pakistan once during his UNGA address. Instead by saying that "When India grows, the world grows. When India reforms, the world transforms," he made Indians proud by making it clear to the international community that the world's largest democracy was flourishing and had made its mark in global affairs. Unlike Khan, Modi substantiated his assertion that "India is a great example of a vibrant democracy," by adding that "The strength of our democracy is demonstrated by the fact that a little boy, who once helped his father at a tea stall in India, is today addressing the UNGA for the fourth time as Prime Minister of India."

Modi also emphasised that "We also need to ensure that no country tries to take advantage of the delicate situation in Afghanistan and use it for its own selfish interests," and this suggestion was very well received as it's an issue that's worrying the international community. At the same time, by adding that "At this time, the people of


Afghanistan, women and children, the minorities there, need help, and we must fulfil our responsibility," he showed compassion for the hapless Afghans thus making it clear that the people of Afghanistan shouldn't be punished for the wrongdoings of the Taliban regime.

While Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi or his diplomatic team at UNGA couldn't refer to any authoritative endorsement of its claims, the Indian side had a lot to say about how New Delhi's views were affirmed by Washington. Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla told the media that "In all the meetings the Prime Minister had, beginning with US leadership, there was a suo moto recognition of the concerns that Pakistan represents as a country that has in many senses both supported and nurtured cross-border militancy, including in Afghanistan and from Afghanistan."

While replying to Khan's misleading statement on Kashmir, the Indian side made it clear that the Union Territories of Jammu &

Kashmir and Ladakh, including "areas that are under illegal occupation of Pakistan were, are and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India." India went a step further by saying, "We call upon Pakistan to immediately vacate all areas under its illegal occupation."

Modi also spoke out against excessive exploitation by emphasising that resources available in the oceans are meant to be used and not abused. Simultaneously, he advocated free passage by saying that "Our oceans are also the lifeline of international trade. We must protect them from the race for expansion. The international community must speak in one voice to strengthen a rule-based world order."

There's much debate in the media on who won the Indo-Pak battle of words at UNGA and the scales clearly tip in favour of Modi, because while Khan's UNGA speech was more of a list of complaints against India and the US, the Indian Prime Minister addressed issues that had global implications. 

World Heart Day: Experts Bat For Adoption Of Digital Health To Cut Risk Of CVD

Bhubaneswar : The Covid pandemic has taught people of the world many lessons most notably the urgent need to inculcate healthy lifestyle habits to steer clear of the health crisis posed by Cardiovascular diseases. As the globe observes World Heart Day, experts

in the health sector have urged people to adopt digital health to reduce risk of falling into heart ailments. World Heart Day is celebrated every year on 29 September. It is organized by World Heart Federation to raise awareness about CVD. According to the

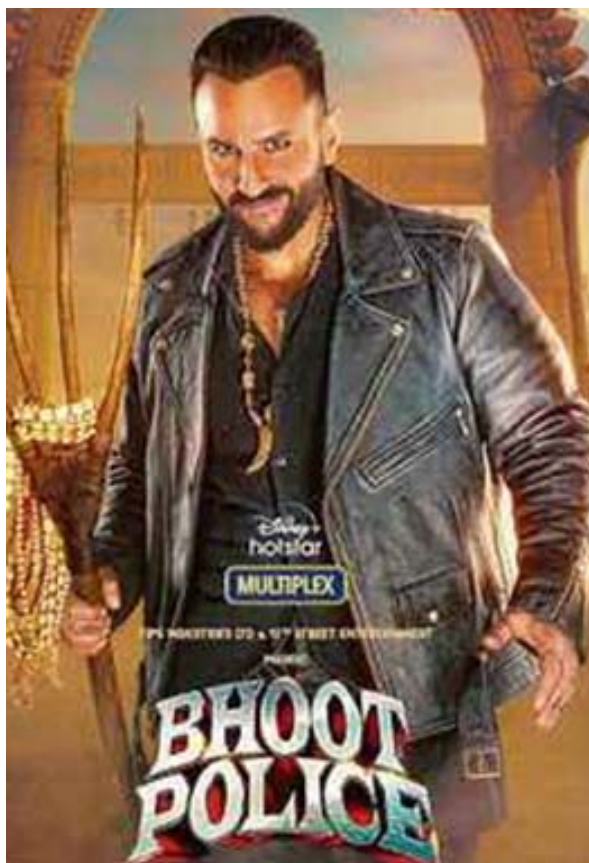
official website of World Heart Federation, CVD is accountable for nearly half of all non-communicable diseases (NCD) deaths making it the world's number one killer. This year, the theme for World Heart Day is 'Use Heart To Connect' which aims to highlight

the power of digital health to improve awareness, prevention and management of CVD globally. In Odisha, several awareness campaigns and fitness activities have been organised today to celebrate World Heart Day this year. The CARE Hospitals, one of the

biggest private healthcare chain in the country, organised massive awareness campaigns, cyclothon in Bhubaneswar, walkathon in Rourkela, and another awareness in Berhampur to mark the occasion. Attending the cyclothon event in the Smart City

Bhubaneswar, health experts stressed on enhancing the use of smart technologies like digital medium to make more and more people aware about heart diseases. They also urged people to adopt healthy active lifestyle to prevent the risk of CVDs.

Bhoot Police



scenes replete with black vomit, walking on roofs and jump scares galore. A little girl mysteriously appears and disappears, roots creep in from windows and ceilings, a ritual gets interrupted... common horror tropes used liberally. Though it's not the Conjuring kind of horror and won't make you close your eyes in fear.

The horror part of the film is definitely weak. What the director and his writing team gets right is the comedy. The most hilarious scenes revolve around mock exorcisms where various devices are used to fool the gullible masses. The witty dialogue takes digs at everything from superstition to nepotism. You laugh when the masses are made to chant Go kichkandi go, or when Saif asks for the GST amount to be included in their fees. Jaaved Jaffrey's character was made to marry a goat seven times and starts bleating like one when he gets afraid. Taken out of context, it all seems extremely silly but works well within the parameters of the film.

What makes the film work is the camaraderie between Saif and Arjun. They come off as brothers who may not see eye to eye on everything but nevertheless love each other to the core and are willing to lay down their lives for each other. Saif is shown to be a motormouth who loves to watch Naagin and has a collection of old Playboy magazines. His constant commentary on everything, especially his younger brother's naivete is hilarious indeed. Arjun gets to play an honest kind of conman. His decency and do-gooder spirit keeps his elder brother grounded. Yami Gautam plays a hard-working businesswoman who dreams of resurrecting her father's business and doesn't have any other layer

to her character. It's Jacqueline who surprisingly gets the better role, that of a Instagram-crazy individual who turns out to have a shrewd brain behind the bimbo act. Thankfully, the director hasn't invested in a romantic track either between Saif and Jacqueline or

CAST:	Saif Ali Khan, Arjun Kapoor, Yami Gautam, Jacqueline Fernandez
DIRECTION:	Pavan Kirpalani
GENRE:	Comedy, horror
DURATION:	2 hours 9 minutes
Critic's Rating:	3.0/5



Vibhooti (Saif Ali Khan) and Chiraunji (Arjun Kapoor) are brothers who try to make a living by posing as exorcists. While Chiraunji actually believes in ghosts, Vibhooti knows it's all a scam. He's in this just for the money and for women. Chiraunji feels their late father Ullat Baba, was a great tantrik and they should carry forward his legacy of genuinely helping people. Their father has left a book of spells with them, which is written in a dead language and Chiraunji is forever trying to decipher it. Maya (Yami Gautam) comes searching for them. She's the owner of a tea estate in Dharamshala. 27 years ago, their father had exorcised an evil spirit from the estate, which has seemingly returned. While Vibhooti looks upon this as a god-given opportunity to milk the rich heiress for money, Chiraunji feels that finally he

can put his occult knowledge to good use. They travel with Maya to her estate, where they meet her sister Kanika (Jacqueline Fernandez), who wants to sell their property and move to London. A sceptical Vibhooti knows that there is a human hand behind the ghost sightings. Chiraunji uncovers the key to the book of spells and is searching for a cure there. The truth lies somewhere between both their beliefs...

Director Pavan Kirpalani's various 'inspirations' for the film includes The Exorcist, Evil Dead, The Hound Of Baskervilles, Scooby Doo and Ghostbusters. In fact, the van where they live in and operate from is hugely reminiscent of both The Ectomobile from Ghostbusters and Mystery Machine from Scooby Doo. The film starts off as pure comedy and then segues into the horror-comedy genre, with

between Arjun and Yami. You don't see them crooning a love song in the picturesque locales.

The actors have done their job for most parts. Saif Ali Khan gets the best lines and his chatterbox act leads you away from the flaws of the film. He's really enjoying himself as an actor in these off-kilter movies. His comic timing is spot on and he should continue to invest

more in comedies. Arjun Kapoor too gets his share of limelight. He's not playing a brooding character for once and keeps it all light-hearted and fun. He gels well with Saif, feeding off him and providing ample laughs in the process. This is perhaps the most commercial film in Yami Gautam's career. Her character is pure vanilla at first but later shown to be spirit-possessed and she has essayed both

versions nicely. Jacqueline Fernandez is the surprise package and essays her selfish-sister act with aplomb. Let's hope she gets more meaty roles in future.

All-in-all, Bhoot Police is a clean comedy devoid of potty jokes and sexual humour. It doesn't scare you much but will certainly make you laugh. It's set up for a sequel so be prepared to follow the further adventures of Vibhooti and Chiraunji.

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