

Panchayat Polls In Odisha In 5 Phases From Feb 16; MCC Comes Into Effect

The counting of votes, which will be done at Block level, will be held on February 26, 27 and 28



Bhubaneswar, Jan 11: The State Election Commissioner Aditya Prasad Padhi on Tuesday announced that the three-tier Panchayat elections in Odisha will be held in five phases starting from February 16, 2022.

As per the detailed schedule announced today, the voting will be held on February 16, 18, 20, 22 and

February 24, 2022. The polling will begin at 7 am and continue till 1 pm.

The counting of votes, which will be done at Block sadar level, will be held on February 26, 27 and 28.

Meanwhile, the model of conduct has come into effect in the State from today and it will be in force till February 28, 2022, said Padhi.

All the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Commission (vide letter No.225 dtd. 10.01.2022) shall be strictly observed during the elections in view of the pandemic, he said.

Odisha will go to the polls for a total of 853 zilla parishad seats, 91,916 wards and 6,794 panchayats. Candidates will be able to contest the elections with party symbols.

Key Takeaway

- Centralised counting of votes to be conducted at Block sadar level
- Details of candidates to be uploaded on the respective district websites

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DADLS-59

ନବବର୍ଷ - ୨୦୨୨ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଓ ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି । ନୂତନ ବର୍ଷ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ହସ, ଖୁସି, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଭରିଦେଉ, ଏତିକି କାମନା । ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଦେଶର ଏକ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ସ୍ତରରେ ନିଷ୍ଠାପର ପ୍ରୟାସ ଜାରିରଖିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଡାକ୍ତର ଶ୍ରୀ ମିଳିନି
(ଗଣେଶୀ ଲାଲ)

ମାନ୍ୟବର ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR- 15001/13/0100/2122

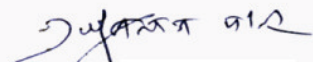


DADLS-59

ନବବର୍ଷ-୨୦୨୨ ଶୁଭ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ସମସ୍ତ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଓ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଅପାର କରୁଣାରୁ ନୂତନ ବର୍ଷ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ହସ, ଖୁସି, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଭରିଦେଉ, ଏହା ହିଁ କାମନା କରୁଛି ।

ନୂଆ କରୋନା ଭୂତାଶୁ ଓମିକ୍ରନ ସଂକ୍ରମଣରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ଆପଣମାନେ କୋଭିଡ୍ ନିୟମାବଳୀ ସଠିକ୍ ଅନୁପାଳନ ପୂର୍ବକ ନୂତନ ବର୍ଷ ପାଳନ କରିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଛି ।


(ବିଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଦାସ)

OIPR- 15001/13/0100/2122

ଜଳସଂପଦ, ସୂଚନା ଓ ଲୋକସମ୍ପର୍କ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ



DADLS-59

ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ୨୦୨୨ ଅବସରରେ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଛି ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଏକ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଓ ସଶକ୍ତ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍ୟମରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହଯୋଗ କାମନା କରୁଛି ।

କରୋନାର ଭୟ ଏବେ ବି ଦୂର ହୋଇନାହିଁ । ସତର୍କ ରହିଲେ ଆମେ ଏହାର ମୁକାବିଲା କରିପାରିବା । ତେଣୁ ମୋର ଅନୁରୋଧ, ନିଜର ଓ ନିଜ ପରିବାରର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଆପଣମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ କୋଭିଡ୍ ନିୟମ କଡ଼ାକଡ଼ି ଭାବେ ପାଳନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ନବୀନ ଟଙ୍କନାୟକ
(ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ)
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR- 15001/13/0100/2122

Veteran Ollywood Actor Mihir Das Passes Away

He was suffering from kidney ailments for the past few years. Around a month ago he was admitted to a private hospital in Cuttack where he was on ventilator support and the dialysis was going on.



Cuttack, Jan 11: A palp of gloom descended on the Odia cine industry on Tuesday when veteran actor Mihir Das passed away while undergoing treatment here at a private Hospital. He was 63.

The actor was suffering from kidney ailments for the past few years. Around a

month ago he was admitted to a private hospital in Cuttack where he was on ventilator support and the dialysis was going on.

Born in Mayurbhanj district on February 11, 1959, Mihir made his debut in an art film, 'School Master'. Thereafter, he made his commercial debut with 'Mathura Bijay' in 1979. The veteran actor bagged the best actor award from the State government for his powerful performance in 'Laxmi Pratima', released in 1998, and 'Pheria Mo Suna Bhauni', released in 2005. For the film 'Mu Tate Love Karuchi', released in 2007, he won the 'best comedian' award. However, people will never forget his stellar performance in 'Pua Mora Bholashankara'.

He hosted the super-hit reality show 'Ashara Aloka' on OTV and helped reconcile many couples and their families battling domestic disputes. He was awarded with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Tarang Cine Productions in 2021.

Women to get Rs 6000 directly in their bank account from govt, Here are the details

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Many special schemes are run by the Central Government in the country, under which financial assistance is given to the people. The Modi government runs different schemes for all the sections of the country's women, poor, farmers, under which financial help is given. Today we will tell you about such a scheme of the Central Government under which the entire 6000 rupees are transferred in the account of women.

Women are given Rs 6000; the benefit of this scheme of the central government is given only to women. The name of this scheme is Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana (PMMVY Scheme), under which the central government gives Rs 6000 to women. Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana in detail:

The Union government of India had launched the

गर्भवती महिलाओ को
सरकार देगी
5000 रु की मदद



Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana on 1 January, 2017. It is also known as Pradhan Mantri Pregnancy Assistance Scheme. The aim of this scheme is to provide financial assistance to women who are pregnant and lactating for the first time. Who can apply for Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana?

Pregnant women can apply for the Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana. Which documents required for Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana

Aadhar card of parents
Parent's identity card,
Child's birth certificate, Bank

account passbook

How to get 6000 rupees through Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana

The purpose of this scheme is to take good care of both mother and child, for which the government gives them financial assistance of Rs 6000.

The government gives this money in 3 phases. In the first phase Rs 1000, in the second phase Rs 2000 and in the third phase Rs 2000 are given to pregnant women. At the same time, the government gives the last 1000 rupees to the hospital at the time of the birth of the child.

Rail Minister Vaishnaw Relishes Odia Cuisine At MP Pratap Sarangi's Kutcha House

Earlier, the Minister laid the foundation stone for the proposed track renewal project ahead of starting passenger train service to Balasore's Nilagiri.

Balasore, Jan 7: Taking a break from his packed schedule in Odisha, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw paid a visit to the humble kutcha dwelling of fellow BJP MP and former MoS Pratap Sarangi where he had a sumptuous time with the Parliamentarian, on



Rail Minister Vaishnaw Relishes Odia Cuisine At MP Pratap Sarangi's Kutcha House

Friday.

Both had lunch together where they relished on exquisite Odia cuisine prepared by Sarangi's sister Bilasini. The platter included rice, dal, palau, khir, paneer curry, manja bara (made from banana stem), Koshala Saga (Amarnath leaves curry), Methi Saga (fenugreek leaves curry), Bilati Khata (tomato chutney), Betala Phula bara and papad.

Sarangi had made the arrangements at his

dilapidated thatched house with a plethora of vegetarian dishes. Vaishnaw, Minister Bishweshwar Tudu and other high ranking railway officials sat on the floor and had their food served on banana leaves.

Following lunch, Vaishnaw attended a foundation laying ceremony at Jaleswar.

Earlier, the Minister laid the foundation stone for the proposed track renewal project ahead of starting passenger train

service to Balasore's Nilagiri.

He said the project will complete in 6 months. "We will carry out inspection of the existing 100-year-old rail track in Nilagiri to identify the required works so that the new proposed passenger train will roll on it within 5-6 months," said Vaishnaw.

As reported, Vaishnaw, who is on a two-day Odisha visit, travelled to Nilagiri station in a loco. After laying the foundation station for the proposed rail project at Nilagiri, the Minister travelled to Basta and inaugurated a new station building. He also laid the foundation stone for the Bhadrak-Khadagpur 3rd railway track project.

Odisha Boy Omkar Tops NDA Exam, Jay Panda Lauds The Feat

In a proud moment for Odisha, Omkar Ashutosh from Puri has topped the National Defence Academy (NDA) and the Naval Academy Examination - 2021.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: In a proud moment for Odisha, Omkar Ashutosh from Puri has topped the National Defence Academy (NDA) and the Naval Academy Examination - 2021.

As per reports, Omkar secured All India Rank 1 in the prestigious entrance examination. Omkar completed his Std 7 from a convent school in Puri and later Std 12 from a school in Dehradun, before appearing for the prestigious



all-India entrance test. Omkar's father Colonel Arun Ray is retired Army officer (Engineers).

Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National Vice President, Baijayant Panda conveyed his pleasure and extended best wishes for the Odisha boy for achieving the extraordinary feat.

Taking to the micro blogging site Twitter, Panda wrote, "Nation is proud of you! I congratulate Omkar Ashutosh from Puri, on becoming the topper of the National Defence Academy & Naval Academy Examination (I) - 2021. Best wishes for your future endeavours."

Not development, Caste reengineering decides UP polls



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

The churning in UP is being keenly observed for the apparent exodus of some caste leaders. Is it caste reengineering or a repeat of the Bengal elections where a similar exodus was seen from the ruling TMC to BJP?

Caste is more powerful in states like UP than "Vikas", development. It is a complex situation. The election would be interesting to observe whether the development would be a vote generator or not.

It is interesting to recall that host of leaders, MLAs and other leaders joined the BJP in Bengal, and most had got tickets too. Only a few got elected in the 2020 Bengal assembly polls election among the 73 MLAs. The story did not end there. As Mamata Banerjee romped back home with a thumping majority, again a reverse exodus

started and continues till the day. That includes the Matua community leaders, who had helped the rise of the BJP in the 2019 elections.

The comparison is slightly incongruous. The politics of Bengal and UP are different. The common tip is whether a Bengal-like situation is developing in UP. If UP's ruling BJP sees the exodus in that light may, it remains comfortable.

Does it mean that the Samajwadi Party has become powerful and can dislodge BJP? Not easy to say but SP is doing caste reengineering almost the way BJP did it some years back. SP leader Akhilesh Yadav is roping in different smaller caste groups. Since December 11, 2021, 17 leaders quit BJP and most of them have joined SP.

Most of the leaders leaving BJP since December 2021 are from different OBC groups influencing different

areas. This includes Omprakash Rajbhar of Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party, a caste-based party of Rajbhars. They are among the extreme backward OBCs influencing many parts of eastern UP.

Swami Prasad Maurya is the leader of another caste group that is spread in about 30 constituencies. Following him so far four others Roshan Lal Verma, Bhagvati Sagar, Roshan Lal Prajapati, ministers Dara Singh Chauhan, and Dharampal Saini have quit the party, and more are said to be in the queue. The UP deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya hints that these people left the party for their selfish ends. The overall perception gaining ground is that the SP has won back its lost grounds with Jaats of Jayant Chaudhury's RLD and minority groups. Yadavs largely are with the SP. Akhilesh Yadav trying to win over smaller parties is again an attempt to unite splinter caste votes, a strategy that helped UP BJP in 2017.

The BJP spokesman Sangeet Ragi says that like the previous election, BJP is replacing about 50 to 60 percent MLAs and those who have left did so fearing it. Of late, another caste leader of Apna Dal is also clamoring to have 36 seats in the state elections. So far BJP has offered five. It is not easy for BJP to concede its strongholds to caste parties. It also cannot strengthen smaller parties at its cost.

The BJP has its concern. It cannot leave the field to caste parties and empower its leaders. The concern is legitimate. Most caste

leaders have been given important party or ministerial portfolios. They are not losing the opportunity to further increase their clout in the region. This does not serve well for the BJP or its cadres for its national goals. The cadre is unhappy in different pockets and the BJP has to take care of them during these critical times.

The party and allied organizations' cadre manage the BJP campaigning to the booth level. It is they who make the voters move to the EVM booths. The social engineering that had helped the BJP win 325 of 403 seats also brought a piece of baggage of smaller parties. These parties cause many problems for big brother. The smaller groups are viewed as a burden but nobody can say so. In a way those leaving BJP are helping it, the party leaders believe. Concern also remains on how to keep those caste groups along.

Those leaving the BJP include upper-caste Brahmins, extreme backward classes, and Nishads, who in 2017 had given the party an edge. They are from places like Allahabad or Prayagraj, Ballia, Bahraich, Sant Kabir Nagar, Sitapur, Azamgarh - all in eastern UP. There are some defections from Agra and Bulandshahr too. Challenge is being noticed in key western UP areas in Mathura, Aligarh, Hathras, Baghpat, and adjacent areas, wherever the RLD has its influence.

As the SP is seemingly gaining enough to pose a challenge, the BJP also has successfully tried some defections from other parties. It however

apparently is not an even keel. Belligerent Akhilesh Yadav is challenging the statement of chief minister Yogi Adityanath - 80 percent with BJP and 20 against - with reversing it as in his favor. He is criticizing Yogi for giving it a communal tinge. The BJP feels it is heightened Hindutva that would help it cross the opposition challenge. May be but if some of the local party leaders and activist cadre are to be believed polarization though maybe helping the party has to look at numbers too.

The party won about 100 seats with a margin of 100 to 2000. These marginal seats are a matter of concern. It is more so as SP is supposed to have increased its vote share from 21.5 percent in 2017 to 31 percent. The BJP vote share remains around 40 percent as per poll surveys. It had 39.67 percent of votes in 2017. This means while the SP has added to its kitty, BJP share remains stagnant or it has not been able to add more support despite its focus on Hindutva, Ram temple, Vishwanath corridor, and Sri Krishna temple.

A BJP election organizer in eastern UP says that this is a small concern. The party is confident about the edge it has against the SP. It has also to see how Congress acts in this election. Though nobody says it has much strength but its recent roadshows, the approach of Priyanka Gandhi, may cause some surprises in pockets. So far no Congress-SP understanding is being seen. If at all that happens there may be a difference in results. The BSP, for now, remains an enigma.

The BJP organizer like some other party campaigners in western UP feels that the BJP gains in the west would be limited. It has to gain the maximum from the east. In the central Avadh region too it may have a mixed bag.

The rise of SP is being noted in the BJP but it says the SP has its baggage. Post recent panchayat elections an aggressive Yadav posturing is said to have annoyed people in the rural areas. It reportedly reminds them of its 2012-17 lawless regime. The more they feel Akhilesh becomes active, it would turn more people against it.

The minorities aligning with SP may also hurt it, is yet another perception. The en bloc voting of the minorities causes reactive voting and that helps the BJP. The Hindutva and minority factors ultimately help the BJP get back to power.

In this entire discourse, development is not a major poll issue despite some claims by BJP and barbs by the opposition against it, so far the poll planks revolve around Modi, Yogi, Akhilesh, the temples, and castes.

Joblessness, farmer's issues, and inflation hurt people but yet not at center stage despite opposition harping on it.

However, till the people go to the poll booths it would remain an intense situation. Many changes may be observed. The BJP is prudently not taking Akhilesh lightly as the course to 2024 national elections would be set by UP. Nobody would have a cakewalk. The scenario remains complex and interesting.

The year ends with RSP's strong records



Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) emerged stronger despite pandemic blues to post brilliant overall performance in various key areas in the Calendar Year 2021. The Steel Plant produced the highest ever 4.37 Million Tonne (MT) Hot Metal, 3.99 MT Crude Steel, and 3.69 MT Saleable Steel in 2021.

RSP also clocked Specific Energy Consumption of 6.02 Giga Calories per tonne of crude steel (Gcal/TCS) in 2021, which is the best figure for any calendar year. Besides, RSP also set a string of production records in 2021 with each of the departments excelling in tandem and setting fresh benchmarks. Tiding over the disruption caused by the 2nd wave, the production trends continued to move northwards. The array of records includes the best

Torpedo lining life of 2584 heats achieved in June 2021 which is also the best in the country. Best monthly production of 363112 tonnes Crude Steel and 342000 tonnes Saleable Steel in March and best monthly Sinter production of 6,53,181 tonnes in July 2021. Bolani Ores Mines belonging to Odisha Group of Mines of RSP recorded all-time best monthly performance with the highest production of 706671 Tonnes of Run of Mines (ROM), 474855 Tonnes of Fines, and 702016 Tonnes of lumps and fines in October 2021.

The recommencement of rolling from the state-of-the-art New Hot Strip Mill-2 on 31st October 2021 was a

major highlight of the calendar year. The first consignment from the Mill set up with cutting-edge technology was flagged off on 28th December 2021.

Another key feature of the year was the visit of the President of India in March to dedicate the Ispat Post Graduate Institute & Super Specialty Hospital to the Nation. It is noteworthy that the ultra-modern hospital was completed within 2 years, despite the pandemic. An ICU facility with 100 ventilators was set up in the hospital to provide treatment to COVID patients. A 100 oxygenated bedded Jumbo Hospital with 50 ventilators namely 'Ispat Nidan Kendra'

was also set up in quick succession to take care of the increasing number of COVID cases.

The Steel Plant and its employees won a host of awards during the Year. RSP won the prestigious GreenTech Awards in Energy Conservation, Effective Safety Culture, Human Resources, and Environment Management. The Steel Plant also won the Grow Care India "Gold Award" for Environment Protection and ENCON Award for Energy Conservation. It also bagged 4 medals including a Gold at the 15th Global Communication Conclave, by PRCI and People First HR Excellence Award - 2021 in 2

categories for its HR initiatives. Many employees of the Plant also matched the par excellence performance and bagged honors at different events across the globe. While 4 employees from the Instrumentation department won the coveted Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar award in 'Class A' given by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, a team of 3 young executives brought laurels for the country by bagging third place in the Global Management Challenge (GMC) International Finals held at Nizhny Novgorod, Russia from 27th to 29th September 2021.

A Rush towards Joining BJD

Sundargarh district has been proving a bane for ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD). Despite building an invincible image in the entire state BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik is still facing stiff resistance from opposition parties in the district. Opposition parties BJP, Congress, CPM are holding the five assembly segments, out of seven, of the district. BJD has yet to win the parliament seat of Sundargarh. Jual Oram of BJP, barring 2009-14, has been winning the seat continuously since 1998. So BJD in its bid to extend its influence in rural areas of the district has adopted a new strategy that is to win over influential political workers of the opposition parties by bringing them in their fold. As the election of Panchayats is coming closer BJD has increased poaching of political workers of other camps. Many political workers who have lost confidence to retain their influence remaining in their original parties are switching over to BJD. Before the 2019 general election Sundargarh's former Congress MLA Jogesh Singh, former CM Hemanand Biswal's daughter Sunita Biswal joined BJD but failed to get people's mandate in their favor.

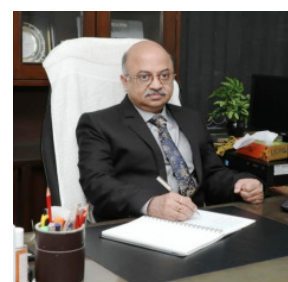
Now Dr.Prafulla Majhi, three-time MLA of Talsara lost his confidence to see any future in congress has joined BJD. In the 2019 election, he slipped to third place after the BJD candidate. BJP's Bhawani Bhoi won the seat for the first time. With Majhi's induction who hails from the dominant Bhuyan community, the ruling party is hoping to strengthen its base in the Sundargarh sub-division ahead of the Zilla Parishad (ZP) elections as well as in the Talsara Assembly constituency and the rest of Sundargarh district. Similarly, BJD has won over JMM's former state vice president Sebian Aind of the Birmitrapur assembly constituency. Aind along with many other JMM workers joined the BJD. It is to be noted that BJP has been able to win the Birmitrapur assembly seat for the first time in 2019. Once it was considered the bastion of JMM. BJD hopes that by bringing political workers from other parties they would be able to turn the party strong.

VS Chakravarty appointed SAIL's Director (Commercial)

Vejendla Srinivasa Chakravarty has taken charge as Director (Commercial) of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) on 24th December 2021. A chemical engineer from Laxminarayan Institute of Technology, Nagpur University, Chakravarty joined SAIL in 1987 in the company's Central

Marketing Organization. Rising through the ranks, Shri Chakravarty became the Executive Director, Marketing in SAIL before taking over as the Director (Commercial) of the company. He is known for his commercial and marketing acumen. Chakravarty has worked on various important projects including

formulation of the company's Annual Business Plan for Marketing and contributed to production planning which has guided the company's long-term marketing strategy. He has taken several new initiatives during his tenure and postings at various marketing verticals in SAIL, responsible for



expanding the company's base and making inroads in the market.

Sundargarh Celebrate its Foundation Day



Sundargarh district celebrated the 75th anniversary of its foundation day on 1st January at its headquarters at Sundargarh. The District administration along with various social and cultural organizations organized a function at Vikash Bhavan on 1st January. Sundargarh MLA Kusum

Tete, District Collector Nikhil Pavan Kalyan attended the function and extended their greeting to the people of the district. The full-day foundation day program began in the morning with the worship of Maa Sambleswari at the temple followed by garlanding of statues of prominent persons.

DM Nikhil Pavan Kalyan while addressing the gathering highlighted the history of how the district came into existence on 1st January 1948 by merging two princely states Gangpur and Bonai. He also spoke about the progress and achievements of the District after its formation in different fields like arts, culture, sports.

A seminar on the district's achievements was also held where MLA Kusum Tete, historian Giri Dandsena, educationist Saroj Kumar Patel and many prominent persons shed light on different sides of the district.

DIPRO Nandini Mundari coordinated the programs.

RSP Rolls Out Jumbo HR Coils

Hot Strip Mill - 2 of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) for the first time has successfully rolled 47 numbers of Jumbo HR coils weighing 32 Ton each and measuring 3.5 x 1500 mm as a part of its stabilisation process. With this it has entered a select club of Steel makers of the country and entered a niche market.

The re-commencement of rolling from the new state of art Hot Strip Mill-2 of RSP began on 31st October 2021 after being put to hold due to Covid induced constraints. The first 100 number of HR Coils was rolled on 8th December 2021 and the first consignment of 16 Nos. of Hot Rolled Coils with a total tonnage of 246 T from the Mill was flagged off on 28th December, 2021. On 3rd January 2022 the mill surpassed the 10,000 Ton production mark. The newly installed world class HSM-2 has a capacity to roll out 3 Million Ton of world class HR coils per annum.

31 Hectors Illegal Prawn Gheris cleared in Balikuda coast

JAGATSINGHPUR, Jan 13: Acting on illegal Prawn Gheri demolition, the Kujanga forest department demolished about 31 hectors unlawful Gheri raised in government and forest lands adjacent in Mala and Marichapur revenue villages under Balikuda block. Forest department sources said that Gheri's clearing drive had been undertaken from August 18, 2021, but caused protests by prawn cultivators the initiative had deferred for three months, meanwhile instructed illegal prawn farmers to clear the alleged Gheries. After ending time stipulation on November 15, 2021 forest department launched the illegal Gheries clearing effort following instruction from DFO Rajnagar, official reports said that Gheris demolished 15 hectors in Naupala village under



Kusupur Panchayat, 12 hectors in Tentulbelari village, and 4 hectors in Bandar village under Balikuda block, informed Kujanga forest department range officer Ranjan Kumar Mishra.

After Gheris demolition the retrieved land would be used to raise the green cover of the locality, Mishra added. The drive was supported by foresters Mangal Hembram, Naveen Kumar Mallick, Niranjan Mandal, Suresh Rout, Bhagaban Mishra, local police, and officials from the civil administration.

A district-level mega job fair organized in Jagatsinghpur

JAGATSINGHPUR, Jan 13: A mega district-level job fair was inaugurated by Paradeep ADM Kanhua Charan Dhir at Adikabi Sarala Das college in Rahama under Tirtol block. The Odisha Skill Development Corporation and Jagatsinghpur district administration jointly organized the fair. More than 446 students of polytechnic, ITI, Diploma and three pass out and class 8 participated, few companies, local industries, hospitals, industrial houses from Para dip joined in the fair. Official sources

revealed that 131 selected students and job aspirants were given offer letters and 252 students were selected to undergo training for job opportunities.

Speaking at the job fair ADM Mr. Dhir laid stress upon the various challenges a student faces seeking a job, he further said that this mega job fair will adopt an integrated approach in addressing the unemployment and employability issues according to their potential and educational qualification.

District employment



officer Tapas Kumar Swain briefed about the various industries and companies participating in the event and said that this mega job fair was organized as an

endeavor to provide employment opportunities to job seekers in the district, which received good responses among students and unemployed youths.

Juvenile police unit training camp organized in Jagatsinghpur

JAGATSINGHPUR, Jan 13: A day-long awareness cum training camp for the Protection of children from sexual offenses [POSCO] Act 2021 and juvenile justice and care Act 2015 was organized at the collector office. The officers from the juvenile police unit and stakeholders child protection unit participated,

district collector, Parul Patwari inaugurated the camp.

Speaking at the training camp collector stressed upon effective implementation of juvenile justice laws and the POSCO Act to protect and prevent the children from indulging in anti-social activities. She further said that every child has the

right to live safer place without fear and discrimination; moreover, participants in the training camp and Child protection unit should conscious of the child laws and its systematic lawful application collector added. Police officers from different police stations, CWC members, child rights bodies, ADM

Jagatsinghpur, SDPO Ramesh Kumar Panda, and PK Acharya resource person and master trainer from National law university participated, district child protection officer Kanhua Charan Rout addressed the inaugural speech, and DCPU probation officer Jagannath Mishra proposed vote of thanks.

JSW launches several measures to woo project site villagers

JAGATSINGHPUR, Jan 13: The JSW special rehabilitation and resettlement [R&R] packages before launching its plan to set up a Rs 55,000 Crore steel plant in Erasama coast near Paradeep, a pro-industry atmosphere has been created in proposed plant site villages. Baring few villagers are opposing the project at Dhinkia village, other project site affected residents are supporting full-heartedly.

Meanwhile, JSW has launched several measures to persuade villagers. The initiative of Betel vines demolition and tree feeling drive has drawn good responses among affected villagers.

Official reports informed that about 302



betel vines have been measured in project site Govindapur, Patana, Mahala and Nuagaon villages from them 248 vines have been razed to earth an amount Rs 4.34 Crore compensation has awarded to about 180 affected betel growers, informed Erasama Tahasildar Choudhury Pranjananda Das who is leading the drive. Amidst betel vines demolition and trees clearing drive

underway at JSW proposed project site, is another significant step forward to woo villager's company authority has appointed 25 Village Level Coordinators [VLC] apart from affected Nuagaon, Gadakujanga and Dhinkia Panchayat's.

The appointed 25 VLCs included as 10 male and 15 female, all hailing from project-affected villages, have been deployed for socio-economic survey,

land demarcation, trees feeling drive so also to assist civil administration officials, and few have been assigned duty in Company office works.

Meanwhile, reports said that hundreds of labor from Nuagaon, Gadakujanga, Govindapur, and Balikuda areas has been deployed by JSW for ongoing project works, including the company has hired vehicles like tractors, JCB machines, Trucks from the local automobile owners engaging in project works.

A ten kilometers Pre-caste boundary wall and road construction in seaside Mahala village under Dhinkia Panchayat has begun. The Rs 7.40 crore two projects are being embarked on by IDCO, after

completion of two projects the land will transfer to JSW proposed integrated steel plant.

Under its Corporate Social Responsibility [CSR] action JSW authority distributed HSC examination test papers to students reading in project site Gadakujanga and Nuagaon Panchayat's high schools.

About 123 HSC test papers have been distributed among the students reading in Banabihari High school in Nuagaon Panchayat and Gadakujanga high school in Gadakujanga Panchayat.

The JSW Utkal, as part of its CSR activity has renovated the Balitutha PHC building and donated a digital kit recently.

The medical kit to

evaluate blood pressure, diabetes, hemoglobin levels, ECG. The kit is specially designed for the early diagnosis of a heart condition and other diseases.

A training program was conducted taking technicians, paramedical staff, and doctors of Balitutha hospital. The JSW Company has assigned a clinician Dr. Bipin Samantray for the Kit operation.

The steelmaker JSW is going ahead with its plan to set up the plant where the Posco had withdrawn its project earlier due to stiff resistance from the local people but JSW's recent efforts indeed to win the supports of the affected villagers, sources added.

Similipal forest inferno, an annual event to remember and prevent it



Baripada, 13 January:-In a bid to check the inferno in Similipal national park and other forests of the district, the National Service Scheme (NSS) of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanjadeo University (MSCB) university of Mayurbhanj district in collaboration with the forest department had started a mass awareness rally on 'Save Similipal' on Thursday from Baripada district headquarters and it will be concluded on 12 of this month.

Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj had flagged off the inaugural rally event in presence of Vice-Chancellor of the university Prof. Kishore Kumar Basa, SP Rishikesh D Khilari, Regional Chief Conservator of Forest and

Field Director of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) M Yogajayanand, DFO of Baripada Santosh Kumar Joshi, DFO of Karanjia Sai Kiran, Subhendu Das the program coordinator of NSS bureau, MSCB university, Prof. Anil Kumar Biswal the PG Council Chairman and staff of university and forest department. The volunteers and program officers of different colleges took part in the awareness rally coming out from Chow field and reached Baripada Jagannath shrine.

Collector Vineet Bhardwaj, the guest of the event, said that the district administration and forest department had prepared an action plan regarding forest fire management. Under the action plan, the power supply department, forest, revenue,

block, and panchayat level officers, police and panchayat representatives, youth clubs and VSS, tribal priests, and local SHGs will involve to aware the people and physically they will appear to mitigate the inferno once it will catch in forests. The rally which will continue for seven days by the student volunteers and program officers of NSS will give a good response and make people aware of the different communities.

Vice-Chancellor of the university Kishore Kumar Basa spoke that the inferno in Similipal biosphere reserve is a major challenging task for the forest department as it has an annual event in the district, the catastrophe must be prevented. "Our objective is to reach the awareness message on 'Save

Similipal' among people in 130 villages close to Similipal biosphere reserve. NSS volunteers and program officers of 14 colleges have been involved in the drive. Besides they are aware among people through the rally, they will interact with the villagers which both NSS volunteers and villagers will learn something save of Similipal and disadvantage of a forest fire.

The RCCF M Yogajayanand said that the forest department has taken its possible steps to make forest fire-free villages.

SP Rishikesh D Khilari said that the Similipal biodiversity is a treasure of the country. Collective and social responsibilities and community help need to convince the people not to set fire in the forest. The ways should be found out to prevent the fire in forests, he said.

Program Coordinator of NSS bureau Subhendu Das said that the NSS volunteers and program officers of 14 colleges will reach 130 villages under Baripada, Rairangpur, Karanjia division in the district and are aware among people for the prevention of forest inferno.

Alleged irregularity in installation of hoarding boards in Baripada municipality

Baripada, Jan 13: The residents of Baripada municipality in the Mayurbhanj district have alleged large-scale irregularities in the installation of hoarding boards in their locality.

They came to know while the low-quality sheets and iron bars were installed in their locality when the municipality is spending a huge sum of Rs.61,000 for each setup to display an image of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and something development messages for Jaga Mission for Basti Basinda in several wards.

The installation work of hoarding boards is underway in several wards in the municipality area to highlight the achievements of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who provided land patta to landless families in colonies of the wards but the municipality is violated the government



guideline as there no tender bid allegedly issued through any newspaper. It had been carried out only by pen and paper to eat the money of the project by the alleged nexus among officials, they said.

The municipality has plans to install 46 hoarding boards within its jurisdiction as soon as possible. As per the quality of sheets and iron bars for a setup of hoarding board installed by the contractor may cost hardly Rs.15, 000. If 46 numbers of setup will be installed there Rs 28.6 lakhs will be provided by the municipality to a contractor instead of around Rs. 6.90 lakh where around Rs.21 lakh of the public revenue will be lost for the project. This amount may be used for other development works for the people of the municipality, said Ex-Chairman Dinakrushna Mohanty.

Kalinga Keshari Jena, a citizen of Madhuban Ward No-9 said that he had met with the Engineer (ME) of the municipality Sachidananda Satpathy two days ago and requested him to intervene in the matter as the contractor had used the very low-quality material of the setup. When he asked the exact date of tender for the project, the ME said that no tender was bid through any newspaper, only notice was attached on the notice board. No direction has been given to any JE under the municipality to oversee the project work to date, the ME told Jena. "As per government guidelines the department must bid the tender for work but the municipality breached it to irregularity on the project. A similar incident took place in a wall painting drive in the municipality area," he demanded a high-level inquiry in the project work as the project is executing without tender processing and using poor quality materials. To bring its knowledge to the district administration and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik over the irregularity of the issue, Jena had tweeted to them on Wednesday that the municipality is the center of corruption.

Contacted, Anya Das the in-charge Executive Officer of the municipality said that the department has followed due process. Any development work had been carried through the tender process, if such an issue is raised she will look into the matter, she said.

Proposal for the construction of coastal protection embankment and marine drive in Udaipur

Balasore, Jan 8: In a bid to take measures against cyclonic devastation in coastal areas, tourism development as well marine drive, Bhograi MLA and chairman of district development committee Ananta Das gave a proposal of approximately Rs.280 crore to State Government for the construction of 17 km coastal protection embankment from Udaipur to Bhusandeswar in Bhograi block on last October.



A beach in Bhograi block

Das said that the properties and sites which had been attractive to tourists were devastated due to cyclones occurring every year. A small amount of financial

assistance given by the Government in different periods is not sufficient to take permanent measures to protect the properties and protection of Udaipur-Talsari

sea beach. The ruin stage of such attractive sights has left the interest of tourists to visit the beach a second time again once they visited. Thousands of tourists visited

Chandneswar Shiva temple, Bhusandeswar Shiva temple but they were not willing to visit Udaipur-Talsari sea beach due to poor road connectivity and destruction of the embankment by the cyclone. It will need a well-protected 17 km sprawling embankment from Udaipur to Bhubaneswar. Once it is constructed then a scenario of the beach will change and it will be set up for a well marine drive and tourism development as well as for the measure of the cyclone, he said.

Superintending Engineer of Balasore Irrigation Division Pravesh Kumar Pradhan acknowledged receipt of the letter.

Police book three engineers for alleged involvement in road construction scam

The trio was booked under sections 420, 406 and 34 of the IPC basing on the FIR of Superintending Engineer of RD department of Jajpur and Kendrapara circle Sanjeeb Kumar Das.

JAJPUR, Jan 10: Kaliapani police has booked three engineers of Rural Development (RD) department for their alleged involvement in a road construction scam. The accused are executive engineer of Jajpur division-1 Bijaya Moharana, additional executing engineer of Duburi sub division Muduli Venkat Raman and junior engineer of Tomka section Rasananda Barik.

The trio was booked under sections 420, 406 and 34 of the IPC basing on the FIR of Superintending Engineer of RD department of Jajpur and Kendrapara circle Sanjeeb Kumar Das. According to the



complaint of Das, a tender for construction of a 7.6 km long motorable road from Ashokjhar foothills to Nagada village was floated at a cost of nearly Rs 12.96 crore in 2016-17. This came in the wake of Nagada hogging headlines over child malnutrition death. The entire money was sanctioned from the district

mineral foundation (DMF) fund. The tender was awarded to Andhra Pradesh-based Haigreeva Infratech project limited. As per the agreement, the contractor or the agency was required to execute all maintenance work of the project for two years after its completion, failing which its security money

was to be forfeited.

While condition of the road became bad a couple of months after its completion, Haigreeva Infratech did not carry out any maintenance work. However, the executive engineer of Jajpur division-1 released the security deposit of over Rs 65 lakh to the contractor despite the

alleged irregularities in road construction work.

When the road condition worsened, the RD department sanctioned Rs 43.65 lakh for its repair and reconstruction in December, 2020 and approved its tender. But instead of floating a single tender, the executive engineer distributed the work through a number of secret tenders of Rs 5 lakh each by K-2 format without approval of the higher authorities. The K-2 contractors carried out shoddy repair work of the road but the executive engineer cleared their payments. After locals brought the irregularities in the road repair work to the

notice of Development Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary Rural Development Pradip Kumar Jena, the Chief Engineer of Planning and Roads was directed to inquire into the allegation.

The Chief Engineer visited the spot and found massive irregularities in the work. Subsequently, the Superintending Engineer was directed to lodge an FIR with the local police against the engineers involved in the scam.

Kaliapani IIC Sushant Kumar Dash said notices have been served on the accused engineers to report in the police station for recording their statements on Tuesday.

From Page-1

Panchayat Polls...

- Voting to begin at 7 AM and continue till 1 PM
- Action to be taken against candidates submitting fake affidavits
- Fully vaccinated people are only allowed into the counting centres
- No rallies or gatherings allowed; candidates can campaign (door-to-door) with a maximum five persons or via digital/virtual mode
- Silence period to begin 36 hours before the voting day

Complete Schedule of the Rural Polls

1. Issue of notice by Election Officer calling for names of the candidates for Samiti Member: January 13
2. Issue of nomination Forms and presentation of nominations: January 17 to 21
3. Scrutiny of nomination: January 22
4. Withdrawal of candidature: Up to January 25 (3 PM)
5. Publication of results, elected Chairman: March 13
6. Date of election of ViceChairman, declaration and publication of results: March 23

Former SBI assistant manager in Cuttack held for fraud

One Geetanjali Das of Mandapada within Choudwar police limits had a savings bank and two fixed deposit accounts worth Rs 7 lakh each at SBI, Chandi Chowk branch.

CUTTACK, Jan 10: The former assistant manager of State Bank of India (SBI), Chandi Chowk branch in the city, was arrested for allegedly withdrawing two matured fixed deposits worth over Rs 7 lakh each of a customer.

Police said that one Geetanjali Das of Mandapada within Choudwar police limits had a savings bank and

two fixed deposit accounts worth Rs 7 lakh each at SBI, Chandi Chowk branch.

The accused Chandra Bhanu Rout of Ramagada under Lalbag police station who was posted as assistant manager of the branch in 2020 had fraudulently withdrawn Das' fixed deposits along with the interest amounting to Rs 16, 15,000 by transferring the sum to various accounts



belonging to himself and his relatives.

The fraud came to light during an internal audit after the accused was transferred and posted as manger of SBI, Tulasipur branch. Basing on departmental proceedings following the audit report, the accused who was suspended, absconded

though a case was filed against him basing on a report submitted by the then branch manager, SBI, Chandi Chowk Sangita Cleetus.

Rout's mobile phone was tracked and he was arrested from Baula Chowk on the day. A car and a scooty purchased by Rout with the money were seized from him.

India's far sight to the near adjacent



Sirish C. Mohanty

The need of the hour for us in our endeavor to become a superpower

The abrupt collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought five new Central Asian republics - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan - into existence for the first time in the modern world as independent and sovereign nation-states. These states are Islamic states with predominantly Turkic peoples who vociferously retain their secular outlook towards the world. Islam holds them together in terms of 'identity', but that is not their only identity marker. They are further divided into clans, tribes, and sects. In geographical terms, Central Asia has been described as "the island part of Asia, farthest removed from the world oceans, amid the greatest landmass on earth". The location of the Central Asian states has made this region very pivotal. Being landlocked makes them vulnerable and dependent on their neighboring states for trade or communications with the world.

Importance of Central Asia

India and the Central Asian regions have a deep and shared

historical past spanning from the Kushan period to Babur, who came from Andijon in the Uzbek part of Ferghana Valley with 12,000 soldiers in 1526 to set up the Mughal dynasty in India. The region is significant to India and the world because of its natural resources, especially hydrocarbon reserves, uranium, and other mineral resources. It lies at the junction of ancient civilizational and trading routes surrounded by two major powers, China and Russia.

Central Asia is a significant region to have engagements with India. Three Central Asian states- Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, share their borders with Afghanistan which has been spreading religious extremism in these countries including India. No wonder India has substantial stakes in this region's security and political stability. India's immediate concern is the chances of rising terrorism in Kashmir aided and abetted by the Taliban. India shares its concern with the states of this region on the dangers that Taliban consolidating in Afghanistan will have a destabilizing influence on Central and South Asia. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have been at the receiving end of Taliban-

influenced religious extremism in the past. Besides the scourge of religion-based violence, the region is also prone to narcotics trafficking, ethnic clashes, and cross-border crime which has not been localized to this region but also Russia and China. The drugs produced in the region end up being sold to the part as far as Europe.

India's engagement

India recognized the Central Asian region's importance as soon as the Soviet Union dissolved and 15 new entities came into being in 1991. India was one of the world's few countries which recognized these states and established full-fledged diplomatic relations. Soon after the formation of Central Asian states, the then Prime Minister of India, PV Narasimha Rao, visited four out of the five states - Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 1993, and Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995.

Over the years, the region's importance has further increased so have the engagements. Though the entire region has been politically volatile, the immediate neighbors of the Central Asian states are not always on the right side of the global

power dynamics. Due to geographical and political factors, India's land access to these states is restricted. Maritime access is also limited to states like Iran, Russia, Pakistan, and China.

Despite limited means to develop the relationship, India came up with the 'Connect Central Asia' policy unveiled in 2012 at Bishkek. Besides many other things, the idea was to concretize the ties based on observing the outcomes and focusing on security and strategic partnership with an eye on the developments in Afghanistan, energy security, and connectivity.

There was little progress in the relationship for the next three years. The closeness received an impetus with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to all five states in 2015. This visit followed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) policy announced by China which had trade routes, mostly overland in Central Asia under development which covered most of Central Asia. This initiative involves billions of dollars in investments, altering the fragile economy and priorities of this region.


Following Modi's visit to these countries, several MoUs and other agreements were signed between these states and India to further concretize this relationship, mainly between Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. Since then, India has regularly conducted military exercises and trained defence personnel.

Way forward

The main issues India has concerns with relating to land connectivity to facilitate trans-border trade. India has taken the

initiative by taking Iran on board and helping Iran develop the Chabahar port as an access to Central Asia via the land route and signing the Ashgabat Agreement, a multi-modal transport network between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, India, Iran, Oman, and Pakistan. This move would help connect Central Asia with these states via land and maritime routes.

India will have to develop multi-modal transport connectivity and rely on on-air and digital connectivity, promoting tourism to and from this region besides trading in goods and services. In a digitally engaged world, we should look forward to increased telemedicine and online education networks in the short run and look for avenues and opportunities for the maritime and land connectivity in the long run. Besides being strategic and secure, our focus should also be on more people-to-people contacts, increased para diplomacy, and other ways to showcase our civilizational connection and closeness.

As a symbol of India's concern, the heads of states of four countries- Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan, Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyzstan, Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, and Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow of Turkmenistan were invited as chief guests of this year's Republic day parade. This was for the first time, in the history of free India- these forgotten land-locked countries of Asia got the diplomatic priorities and that was the need of the hour for us in our endeavor to become a superpower. 

Use it after March 10: SP leader sends lock to BJP office after series of resignations

Lucknow, Jan 11: Samajwadi Party spokesperson IP Singh has sent a lock as a gift to BJP headquarters after a series of resignations in the Saffron party on Tuesday. The order was addressed to BJP's Swatantra Dev Singh.

Tagging him on Twitter, IP Singh wrote: "Omprakash Rajbhar ji, Jayant Choudhary ji, Rajmata Krishna Patel ji, Sanjay Chauhan ji and now Swamiprasad Maurya ji are with Samajwadi Party. I have sent a lock to BJP Headquarters @swatantrabjp

ji as a gift, put it after March 10 (result day) and go home. It's not a wave, it's a SP storm."

After Uttar Pradesh labour minister Swami Prasad Maurya resigned from the Cabinet and the BJP on Tuesday, three other BJP MLAs in the state followed suit and quit the party.

This includes Tilhar MLA Roshan Lal Verma, Bilhaur MLA Bhagwati Prasad Sagar and Tindwari MLA Brajesh Prajapati. Like Swami Prasad Maurya, Roshan Lal Verma too has



Swami Prasad Maurya with Akhilesh after quitting BJP

decided to join the Samajwadi Party ahead of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election to be held in February and March this year.

UP MINISTER SWAMI PRASAD MAURYA RESIGNS

Uttar Pradesh minister Swami Prasad Maurya


posted his resignation letter on Twitter on Tuesday. In his letter, he alleged negligence towards Dalits, farmers, small and medium scale businesses and unemployed youths by the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government in Uttar Pradesh.

A few minutes after Swami Prasad Maurya posted his resignation letter on social media, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav tweeted a photograph with the leader and welcomed him to his party.

"Maurya has always stood for justice and is a

well-known face among the masses. I welcome him and all the other leaders, workers and supporters into the Samajwadi party," Yadav said.

On the other hand, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya urged Swami Prasad Maurya to engage in talks before taking hasty decisions.

The Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh will be held in seven phases from February 7 onwards. Counting of votes will take place on March 10. 

Whoever Played around Modi's Security Paid the Price



Sirish C. Mohanty

like to go into the role of Centre's Intelligence Bureau, Punjab Police as well as delve into the question of conduct of all-India service officers in a state ruled by an Opposition party during the visit of Union government's Constitutional authorities. The incumbent Chief Secretary of Punjab, who oversees the home department, being the second member of this probe, makes the efficacy of the exercise tenuous. Centre too has set up a probe headed by Secretary (Security): the very fact that even in a crucial matter like breach in PM's

Prime Minister Modi had to return to Delhi on Wednesday without completing his Ferozepur election fixture due to the negligence of the government of Punjab and its police.

Shades of Mamata Banerjee were discernible in



Channi Should Learn: Whoever Played around with Modi's Security Paid the Price

Charanjit Channi when he sought to pooh-pooh the egregious breach in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security protocol on 5 January at Piareana, a desolate spot on the Moga-Ferozepur National Highway. No PM before him had been subjected to such security sabotage. And that too in a border district, where Pakistan's deep state is perennially airdropping arms through drones. As on 28 May 2021 at Kalaikunda, where West Bengal's then Chief Secretary acted more as a minion of the Chief Minister than as a culpable all-India services officer, the state bureaucracy of Punjab on 5 January chose to wink while exigency of party politics rather than primacy of governance seemed to guide the Chief Minister of Punjab in the face of grave risk to national security. The two-member panel headed by Justice Mehtab Singh Gill, appointed by Channi, which is probing the incident may

security the Union and state governments are not acting in tandem throws up deeper questions on federalism.

Former president of Punjab Congress, Sunil Jakhar, exhibited statesmanship when he reacted to the incident: "It's against Punjabiyat. A secure passage to PM to address BJP's rally in Ferozepur should have been ensured. This is how democracy works." Anandpur Sahib MP of the party, Manish Tewari, went a step further-he said "Political football" ought not to be played on the issue. (Tewari had lost his father Prof V.N. Tewari, a sitting MP, to terrorists' bullets in April 1984.) This was in sharp contrast to the stand taken by CM of Punjab, the official spokesman of AICC, Randeep Surjewla and the Youth Congress chief, B.V. Srinivas, who had the gall to tweet: "Modiji how's the josh?" Congress-related Twitter handles in fact rejoiced the stoppage of the



Nitish Kumar's party JD (U) was reduced to just two seats

PM's cavalcade. Next morning the maverick Navjot Sidhu, the Punjab PCC chief, mocked the PM incident, calling it a "drama". (Jakhar's criticism was not in isolation-a day earlier senior Congress leader and legal eagle Abhishek Manu Sangvi had pointed out that his party was perhaps falling prey to China's psycho-propaganda on the Galwan issue.) Has Congress, which is India's party of Freedom, come to such a pass that issues of national security are dealt with frivolously, with petty partisan considerations? The tragic deaths of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, both victims of heinous terrorism, were loss to the nation mourned across political divide. On 6 January, party's acting chief Sonia Gandhi called up Channi and expressed her concern and said PM's security ought not to be taken lightly. The chief of principal Opposition party taking more than 24 hours to react by itself carries a tale.

5 January was less than a month after 8 December, when India lost its first Chief of Defence Staff in a helicopter crash-the report was out on 5 January, which pointed out human error as the possible cause. Sagacity rather than cocky demeanour has to be the guiding principle behind VVIP security. Many questions arise out of the Piareana incident. Advance security liaison between the Special Protection Group (SPG), tasked with PM's security and state police must ensure safe access and ingress for the VVIP. In the given

case, Punjab's acting DGP has said that he had cautioned about inclement weather and farmers' agitation. Ever since Channi became CM, Navjot Sidhu has been seeking to interfere in top government appointments, thereby creating ad hocism. Sidhu is on record to have praised an MLA at a recent rally for his propensity to make police officers "wet their pants": Punjab Police thus functions in subnormal conditions. The state's deputy CM, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, who holds the Home portfolio, has been having a running battle with Navjot Sidhu and even offered his portfolio to the former cricketer to express his angst: the home department of a sensitive border state thus is not in pink of health.

Channi must learn from history. There have been instances in the past two decades- when chief ministers of different states tried to play around with Narendra Modi, especially with his security. Instead of being able to harm Modi, the CMs had to pay a heavy price for this.

Nitish Kumar, who had been running the government in Bihar with the BJP since 2005 after the end of the Lalu-Rabri era, broke the 17-year-old alliance on June 16, 2013, when Narendra Modi was given the reins of the campaign by the BJP for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The announcement of the appointment of the chairman of the campaign committee was made on June 9, 2013, in Goa. Nitish Kumar then expelled BJP ministers from

his government.

Four months later, on October 27, 2013, Modi's Hunkar rally was organised in Patna, by which time he had also been declared the official candidate for the Prime Minister's post by the BJP. As Modi had reached Patna airport to address the rally, a string of explosions rocked Gandhi Maidan. Central intelligence agencies had already expressed apprehensions that Modi's rally was on the target of jihadi terrorist groups. The Bihar Police neither launched a special drive to nab the conspirators nor did they keep a tight vigil at the venue of the rally. Modi though remained steadfast reached Gandhi Maidan to address the rally. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections in Bihar, people put 31 out of the total 40 seats in the NDA's bag. During the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Nitish Kumar's party JD (U) was reduced to just two seats. Unhappy with the result, he

with N Chandrababu Naidu as well. Once the darling of Corporate India as the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, and was one of the most important leaders of the NDA. He once dreamt of becoming the PM. By 2018, he too had left the NDA and become a staunch political enemy of Modi. Roaming across the country, he kept mobilising people against Modi. This was fine but then he took his anger with Modi towards personal enmity. Finally, his name was extinguished from the political theater.

There are many such stories. Whoever tried to harm Modi by cultivating personal enmity with him has suffered, especially those who played with his security or life. P Chidambaram, who was once the home minister of the country will also realise this, as he tried to implicate Modi in court cases and also to reduce his security cordon. Chidambaram reaped the



Chandra Babu Naidu breaks down after electoral elimination

left the post of chief minister of Bihar immediately after the polls, and Jitan Ram Manjhi was made the CM as a Dalit face and all remember the farce thereafter.

Ajit Singh, the son of Chaudhary Charan Singh and the minister of civil aviation in the UPA government, also found a tiff with Modi very expensive. This anecdote is also related to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Modi had reached Baghpat on March 29, 2014, for his election campaign. Since Ajit Singh was the civil aviation minister of the UPA government, he tried to disrupt Modi's flights. But what happened-Ajit Singh had to lick the dust in the election.

The same thing happened

consequences. He could not even muster the courage to contest the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and propped up his son for his seat in Sivaganga, campaigned there with full force, yet his son Karti had to face defeat.

Channi should learn from all these anecdotes and incidents and so should his party the Congress, which Modi has pushed into its worst phase in its 125-year-long existence. To fight with Modi, you will have to get on the ground, you will have to work hard, win the trust of the people, and, yes, conspiracies against him will not work. History is witness that whoever tried this with Modi suffered politically. Channi has to learn this lesson from history.

Shop Owners At Bhubaneswar's Market Building Down Shutter Protest Encroachment By Street Vendors

Bhubaneswar, Jan 4: The shop owners' association at Market Building in Bhubaneswar resorted to bandh on Tuesday alleging non-fulfilment of their demands to evict street vendors.

As per reports, the shop owners association has been demanding the eviction of the street vendors from the market complex as those are causing problems in running usual business. However, the pleas fell on deaf ears and the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) failed to sort out the issues despite multiple requests, alleged the striking members of the association.

To highlight their demand, the association members resorted to shutting down the market complex for an indefinite time today.

The association members alleged that antisocial activities are on



Shop Owners Down Shutter Protest Encroachment By Street Vendors

the rise with an increase in the number of vendors. Recently, two major cases of squabble were reported from the area.

"In addition to the beautification process by the civic body, our association had collected around Rs 20 lakh to further enhance the beauty of the market as people from

different states and countries visit this place for shopping," said Pradumnya, the president of the association.

He said following incidents of extortion and violent brawls in 2014, the then BMC Mayor had initiated a process to evict the vendors from the market space and had

rehabilitated around 242 vendors in the vicinity.

"However, in the last one year, the number of street vendors has increased and the people who earlier used to illegally rent out spaces in the market to the vendors have become active. They are collecting Rs 500- 1000 per day from vendors by such allotment.

Beautification of the Market Building area was carried out in 2010 by the BMC and street vendors were restricted entry inside the complex. However, several vendors have occupied the areas meant for the movement of pedestrians. The number of such vendors is increasing day by day.

With that illegal activities witnessed a rise," Pradyumna said.

Meanwhile, the secretary of the shop owners association, Sisir Panda said, "The spaces are illegally allotted for rent for which gangs are getting engaged in violent brawls to claim the pie. This is causing inconvenience to businesses as well as customers. Such incidents are getting frequent nowadays. If the issue is not sorted out at the earliest, we will not open shops," he said.

Meanwhile, BMC has invited the association members for a meeting on Wednesday to discuss the issues in detail.

It is pertinent to mention here that beautification of the Market Building area was carried out in 2010 by the BMC and street vendors were restricted entry inside the complex. However, several vendors have occupied the areas meant for the movement of pedestrians. The number of such vendors is increasing day by day. 🚫

Bolangir Gets Set To Witness Sulia Jatra



Bolangir, Jan 10: Festive fervour has already gripped Khairagura and Kumuria villages in Bolangir district, as 'Sulia Jatra', one of the famous festivals of tribals, will be observed on Tuesday.

With only a few hours left for the festival to begin, the preparations for the carnival are in their last stages at Khairagura and Kumuria villages.

On Monday, prior to the

festival, an important ritual of worshipping traditional weapons was performed amidst the reverberating sound of beating of 'panchabadya'.

Since it has been a tradition to sacrifice animals and birds at the altar during the festival, it is expected that the custom may be followed this time as well.

At the same time, the administration has made elaborate arrangements to

ensure the observance of the festival in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines.

While four platoons of police force have been deployed at the festival ground, all those who will take part in the festival like priests and servitors have been subjected to RT-PCR test. Chief priest of Sanakhala Harihaara Jhankar said that the tradition of sacrificing animal and bird at the shrine will be performed as usual. When asked about preparations, Sub-Collector of Bolangir, Lambodara Dharua said all steps have been taken to ensure the festival is observed with Covid-19 guidelines. RT-PCR tests have been conducted on the priests and their associates. 🚫

Duty of every govt to provide foolproof security to PM: CM Naveen

Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik took to Twitter and wrote "the Prime Minister of India is an institution. It is the duty of every government to provide foolproof security and safeguard the dignity of this institution", supporting the PM on the recent security breach in Punjab.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 6: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik voiced his support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the security breach in Punjab.

CM Patnaik took to Twitter and wrote: "The Prime Minister of India is an institution. It is the duty of every government to provide foolproof security and safeguard the dignity of this institution. Anything contrary should be unacceptable in our democracy."

Soon after Odisha CM's tweet, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan praised Patnaik's gesture on Twitter and wrote "This is how a democracy like in India should function. We all can have differing ideologies, beliefs & opinions but that can be no ground to legitimise a breach in

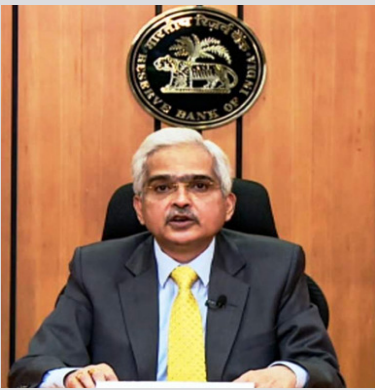


The PM is an institution and every government should provide foolproof security for the Prime Minister. Appreciate @Naveen_Odisha ji for his concern for PM Modi's security."

Modi's PLI scheme to help India to grow faster than emerging markets: World Bank

The World Bank said it has upgraded its expectations for India's growth to 8.7% in FY 2022-23 "to reflect an improving investment outlook with private investment, particularly

Paribas Asset Management said in a note. "According to industry estimates, the schemes could generate \$150 billion in new sales, and \$70 billion of domestic value-added, or 1.7% of 2027 GDP. They could add a substantial 0.3% to annual GDP growth between 2023 and 2027. The direct impact of these schemes is likely to be larger on labour (an estimated 2.8 million new jobs) than on capital spending (estimated at \$28 billion). There is likely to be significant upstream activity as a result, driving further gains in jobs and spending," the note added.



India is expected to grow at 9.2% in comparison to RBI's forecast of 9.5%.

manufacturing, benefiting from the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, and increases in infrastructure investment."

Modi government's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme will likely help India's economy grow at 8.7% in the next financial year 2022-23, beating emerging market peers including China, said the World Bank. In comparison, China, Indonesia and Bangladesh are expected to grow at 5.1%, 5.2% and 6.4% respectively in the emerging market and developing economies. The World Bank said in its Global Economic Prospects report it has upgraded its expectations for India's growth to 8.7% in FY 2022-23 and 6.8% in FY 2023-24 "to reflect an improving investment outlook with private investment, particularly manufacturing, benefiting from the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, and increases in infrastructure investment." In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre launched the PLI scheme with incentives of Rs 1.97 lakh crore over a five-year period for 13 key sectors, to boost production and exports. Government has launched the scheme for sectors such as telecom, electronics, auto parts, advanced batteries, pharmaceutical drugs, and solar energy components. This incentivising scheme in turn is expected to increase the country's production by \$520 billion in the next five years, Prime Minister Modi said last year.

PLI to add 1.7% to India's GDP India is expected to add 1.7% in its GDP by 2027 through these schemes spurring new jobs, BNP

Paribas Asset Management said in a note. "According to industry estimates, the schemes could generate \$150 billion in new sales, and \$70 billion of domestic value-added, or 1.7% of 2027 GDP. They could add a substantial 0.3% to annual GDP growth between 2023 and 2027. The direct impact of these schemes is likely to be larger on labour (an estimated 2.8 million new jobs) than on capital spending (estimated at \$28 billion). There is likely to be significant upstream activity as a result, driving further gains in jobs and spending," the note added.

As an emerging economy, India holds potential to tap into the market gap left by China, as the latter recoups itself from supply chain snags and trade war with the United States. "As a stable economy with a host of enabling factors for attracting investments, we believe India is a natural choice in filling the supply chain vacuum the exodus from China has left. Recognising this opportunity, India's prime minister has laid out his vision of a 'Self-reliant India'," BNP Paribas Asset Management said.

The World Bank said in its report published Tuesday that "growth in emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) is forecast to moderate to 4.6 percent in 2022, as macroeconomic policy support continues to be withdrawn and the rebound in China eases." The World Bank however gave a positive outlook for India saying investments in India should benefit from the resumption of contact-intensive services, and ongoing but narrowing monetary and fiscal policy support. "The growth outlook will also be supported by ongoing structural reforms, a better-than-expected financial sector recovery, and measures to resolve financial sector challenges despite ongoing risks," IMF said.

For the fiscal year 2021-22 the Washington DC-based institution said it has kept its GDP expectations unchanged at 8.3%. According to the government's first advance estimates India released last week, India is expected to grow at 9.2% in comparison to RBI's forecast of 9.5%.

CM inaugurates Tata Steel's iron ore expansion program at Joda

The local people were kept in dark of this great event- local development turns a hollow slogan!

Joda, Jan 12: Tata Steel is setting up a Beneficiation Plant at Joda East Iron Mine (JEIM). The foundation stone for the Beneficiation Plant of JEIM was laid by Shree Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha in a virtual ceremony today. Senior Tata Steel officials also connected virtually for the groundbreaking ceremony.

DB Sundara Ramam, Vice President, Raw Materials, Tata Steel said: "Raw Materials are essential for manufacturing steel. This beneficiation plant at Joda East Iron Mine will prove to be a strategic addition to meet our expansion target in the months to come. The company has been steadily participating in the development of the State of Odisha and its people. We are thankful to the Odisha government for all their support."

JEIM remains operational since 1956 and the entire iron ore produced from the mine is fed to the company's steel plants along with its sister companies & subsidiaries at Jamshedpur (East Singhbhum



District of Jharkhand), Kalinganagar (Jajpur District of Odisha), Meramandali (Dhenkanal District of Odisha) & Tata Steel Long Products Gamharia (Seraikeela-Kharsawan District of Jharkhand).

DB Sundara Raman said the beneficiation plant at Joda East Iron ore Mine will prove to be a strategic addition to meet the expansion target in the coming months. The company has been steadily participating in the development of Odisha and its people, he added.

The steel conglomerate claims that Environment management has always been a

core part of Tata Steel's operations. Regular monitoring of air, noise, surface water quality, and groundwater level and its quality is carried out and adequate steps are taken to ensure the environment remains pollution-free. CSR activities being run by Tata Steel will continue further in and around Joda in various sectors which include Education, Healthcare, Sustainable livelihood, Water and sanitation, Rural Infrastructure development, Sports and Empowerment. The expansion project will result in the growth of the surrounding areas by increasing direct & indirect employment

opportunities in the region including ancillary development and supporting infrastructure. The project will further add to their social and economic growth in terms of indirect income generation opportunities.

But, eyebrows arise, what made the company hide the news of such magnitude from the local public. Is it apprehending the local population may demand their legitimate rights in employment and other facilities they have been deprived of for years while their voices have been choked through the orchestrated public hearings?

People demand cancellation of public hearings at Joda and Jagatsinghpur

Jagatsinghpur/Joda, Jan 13: A public hearing is the environmental clearance process in which stakeholders can interact directly with SPCB, civil administration, project sympathizers about the concerns regarding the upcoming project. The purpose of the public hearings is to provide an opportunity for affected villagers to share and receive information associated with the project and legally hold it on the proposed project site. But in most cases, things are not going that way. The administration and the police act as the representative of the entrepreneurs while the OSPCB remains the silent

spectator.

Naba Nirman Krushak Sangathan [NNKS] a frontal farmer body of state and 'Adhibas' social group in Kujanga have expressed annoyance holding public hearings to obtain the environmental clearance process for the proposed Petroleum, chemicals, and Petrochemicals investment Region [PCPIR] and Essar backed Greenfield Pallet plant in Paradeep.

Both organizations have petitioned Jagatsinghpur district collector seeking to cancel the public hearings conducted by OSPCB and civil administration jointly

which left out the affected villagers, farmers, and local PRI members to participate, including the hearings, had not done in affected project site villages mandatory under an industrial law, conducted at Paradip 20 km away from the affected villages.

Meanwhile, NNKS supporters have threatened to go on agitation opposing the discrepancy adopted by SPCB and Paradip civil administration ignoring the villagers at public hearings, said Bishnu charan Swain, NNKS Kujanga block coordinator.

Similarly, the villagers of Bandhuabada near Joda have

petitioned the Collector, Keonjhar to cancel the public hearing conducted to convert forest land into mining used by the JSW at the Jajang Iron mine. The villagers alleged that a huge police force was posted at the public hearing to frighten the villagers. They have also alleged that the police have made house-to-house searches to create an atmosphere of fear among the villagers. The villagers have urged the collector to cancel the gram sabha. The villagers have further said that they are prepared to go for agitation if their demand is not met and the forest land is converted to mining use.

Odisha raises maximum age limit to apply for state govt jobs



Bhubaneswar, Jan 10: Odisha chief secretary Mahapatra said the decision was taken to enable the youth who could not appear in recruitment

2023, state chief secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said on Monday.

Currently, the maximum age limit to apply for state government services is 32 years. Mahapatra said the decision was taken to enable the youth who could not appear in recruitment exams due to coronavirus pandemic.

"It has come to the notice of the government that the recruitment process has been delayed due to unavoidable reasons and

as a result the age of the applicant gets over and they do not get ample chance to participate in the recruitment examination," a government statement read.

"In this backdrop, the state government is pleased to enhance the upper age limit for entry into government service from 32 years to 38 years only for the advertisements already made or to be made during the calendar years 2021, 2022 and 2023," the statement added.

Further, there are also relaxations for reserved categories over and above the upper age limit of 38 years. For instance, the upper age limit for those who come under SC/ST category is 43 years.

Earlier during the day, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has inaugurated two new industrial projects and performed groundbreaking ceremony for 11 others, all of which taken together entails an investment of

₹2,360 crore.

The projects, Patnaik said, will generate employment opportunities for at least 3,200 people. "The 13 projects for which groundbreaking and inauguration have been undertaken today are spread over nine districts.

Even in these difficult times amid the onslaught of Covid-19, the state has attracted major investments and continues to enjoy the trust of investors," the CM said.

EC Declares Dates for Assembly Elections in UP, Punjab, Goa, U'khand & Manipur

New Delhi, Jan 8: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday announced the dates for assembly polls in five states - Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab, and Manipur. While the term of the current Uttar Pradesh assembly is ending in May, those of the other four assemblies are ending on different dates in March.

Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said basic preparations were taken to ensure Covid-safe election, hassle-free voter experience, and maximum voters participation. The commission visited poll-bound states to review preparations and has been working to ensure Covid-free elections. "We also held meetings with health officials of the states which are going to polls," he said.

• All elections in five states will be completed in seven phases. • The first date of issuing of notification will start on January 14 in Uttar Pradesh. The date of polling for the first phase in the state is February 10.

• Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Goa will be held in a single phase on February 14. Issuing of notification will be on January 21. UP elections will also continue for the second phase on February 14.

• The third phase of UP elections will be held on February 20.

• The fourth phase of UP elections will be held on February 23.

• Manipur will go for polling in two phases. The first phase is on February 27. The fifth phase polling on the same day for Uttar Pradesh.

• ECI has mandated that at least one polling station managed exclusively by women shall be

be the sixth phase for Uttar Pradesh.

• In the seventh phase, Uttar Pradesh will go for polling on March 7.

• The results of all seven states will be announced on March 10.

• Basic preparations were taken to ensure Covid-19 safe election, hassle-free voter experience, and maximum voters participation.

• A total of 690 Assembly constituencies in Goa, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Punjab will go to the polls this time.

• The terms of expiry of assemblies in five poll-bound states: Goa: March 15, 2022, Manipur: March 19, 2022, Uttarakhand: March 23, 2022, Punjab: March 23, 2022, Uttar Pradesh: May 14, 2022

• Elections to be held for 403 assembly seats in UP, 117 in Punjab, 70 in Uttarakhand 60 in Manipur, and 40 in Goa.

• As Covid cases soared given the Omicron variant, ECI held meetings with Union Health Secretary, Home Secretary, experts, and health secretaries of States. After taking these views and ground situation, ECI decided to announce polls with safety norms in place.

• A total of 18.34 crore electors including service voters will take part in this election. Out of this, 8.55 crore are women electors.

• 24.9 lakh first-time electors are registered in the five states including Uttar Pradesh.

• 2, 15,368 polling stations will be there in five states; An increase of 16 percent since 2017.

• ECI has mandated that at least one polling station managed exclusively by women shall be



Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra declares to ensure Covid-safe election

set up in every Assembly constituency. Our officers have identified much more than that. There are 690 Assembly seats but we are setting up 1,620 such polling booths.

• Online nomination facility is available to candidates in the upcoming polls; however, this will be voluntary.

• 60% of the polling stations have been covered by webcasting for transparency.

• Senior citizens above 80 years of age, persons with disabilities and Covid-19 patients can vote by postal ballot.

• It is mandatory for political parties to upload on their website detailed information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases selected as poll candidates. They will also have to give a reason to select the candidate.

• EVMs and VVPATs will be utilized in all the polling stations. Election Commission has already made arrangements to ensure an adequate number of EVMs and VVPATs for the smooth conduct of elections.

• Model code of conduct

comes into immediate effect in the five states. Election Commission has made elaborate arrangements for ensuring the effective implementation of the MCC guidelines. Any violation of these guidelines will be strictly dealt with.

• Our vigil application should be used by voters to report any incident of violation of the Model Code of Conduct, distribution of money & freebies. Within 100 minutes of the complaint, ECI officials will reach the place of the offence.

• Polling stations identified where the voting percentage was lower than earlier years or below average to take corrective measures.

• Since the Covid situation is very dynamic, all central, state officials on election duty to be doubly vaccinated.

• All EC officials and employees will be treated like frontline workers and will be vaccinated with the booster or precautionary dose.

• Polling time has been increased by one hour in all five assembly states.

Naveen Patnaik responds to SOS for Missionaries of Charity gives Rs. 79 lakh

BHUBANESWAR, Jan 4: Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday sanctioned ₹78.76 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to support 13 institutions run by Missionaries of Charity (MoC) in the state, a statement by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

"Based on the requests of collectors, the Chief Minister has sanctioned assistance for 13 institutions run by MoC spread over 8 districts. More than 900 inmates in various leprosy homes and orphanages in the state will be benefited by this decision," the CMO said.

The move comes days after the organisation asked the central government to freeze its bank accounts following the Union home ministry's refusal to renew its FCRA licence. Patnaik had responded to reports about the home ministry decision with instructions to district collectors to help out the charity to ensure that no inmate at any shelter or orphanage run by the organisation in the state suffers.

"We are grateful to the chief minister for his support and we are indebted to the people of Odisha," said Sister Stanley Rose of Missionaries of Charity after the CM's order. Rose said the freezing of bank accounts has not hit the activities of the organisation. "The Almighty will take care of our needs."

Missionaries of Charity run a leprosy home on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar housing 300 inmates. It also runs 12 orphanages with 600-odd inmates. Besides, there are 87 sisters who look

after the day-to-day affairs of these institutions.

Odisha BJP spokesperson Sajjan Sharma said the chief minister's decision may send a wrong message.

"The FCRA renewal of Missionaries of Charity was not done due to audit irregularities. Today's order clearly shows his government would stand for Missionaries of Charity irrespective of its legalities and proprieties. In a federal government, when the Centre takes certain steps, the states should respect it. But the move by Patnaik is against cooperative federalism," Sharma said.

On December 25, the Ministry of Home Affairs said that Missionaries of Charity's request for renewal of their certification under FCRA was refused, for "not meeting the eligibility conditions under the FCRA, 2010 and Foreign Contribution Regulation Rules (FCRR) 2011". The registration was originally set to expire on October 31; however, its license was extended till December 31 to give them time to complete the renewal process, due to Covid-19 disruptions.

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration is mandatory to receive foreign donations. A home ministry official in the mean time said that with the restoration of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licence, the Kolkata-based famed organisation will hence forth be able to receive foreign fundings and also can spend the money lying in the banks.

Arrests after female Muslim activists 'put up for sale' in fake auction

Police have detained a woman accused of organising a fake online auction in which hundreds of prominent female Muslims were put up "for sale" on a website.

There were shock waves of anger and disgust in India after it emerged that a website calling itself Bulli Bai, an offensive term for Muslims, had set up a pretend auction of more than 100 Muslim women, including journalists, academics, activists, scholars and artists, where they were to be "sold" as servants for negligible sums.

Although no real transactions took place, the Bulli Bai website featured photos of the women, many taken from their social media and manipulated. A large number of the women targeted have been vocal critics of the ruling Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) government and many said the purpose of the site was to humiliate and silence outspoken Muslim women and help fracture India down sectarian lines.

It is the second recent incident where Muslim women in India have been harassed by being "sold" online, and follows a similar fake auction held online last July. Though several police complaints were filed in that case, no one has been arrested.

The Bulli Bai website was removed within 24 hours, and complaints were filed to the police by victims in Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. On Tuesday, Mumbai police said they had detained a woman in



Protesters in New Delhi

Uttarakhand who is the main accused, and arrested a male engineering student in Bengaluru after extensive questioning.

Sayema Rahman, a popular radio DJ, found out she was among those featured on the website when a screenshot of her name and face was sent to her by a journalist.

"The most shocking part is that I'm not shocked anymore because this has been happening relentlessly to women for quite some time now, especially with this communal angle," said Rahman.

"It's Islamophobia coupled with misogyny. I was targeted, and a whole lot of other women were targeted, because we are the vocal voices, we are the liberated voices, and they want to silence us by commodifying us, humiliating us and trying to scare us."

Rahman said victims were still waiting for the prime minister, Narendra Modi, or the central government, in particular the home ministry and the ministry for women, to condemn the Bulli Bai website. "This is a massive national scandal but we are yet to hear a

word from the central government condemning this or offering assurances, and that is very unsettling and very unnerving for the safety of women in this country," she said.

Speaking to the Guardian, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the IT minister, said his department's investigative unit had looked into the website, and those responsible would be prosecuted. "The government of India is committed to ensuring the internet is open, trusted and safe for all Indians. We take this responsibility very seriously," he said.

Khalida Parveen, 67, a veteran activist, was also among the women targeted. On Monday, she filed a police complaint in her home city of Hyderabad against the perpetrators, and the GitHub platform that had facilitated the site.

A GitHub spokesperson said it had taken down the user account that had hosted the website, and would cooperate with investigating authorities.

Parveen, in her police

complaint, called for the perpetrators to be charged with "harassing me, horribly sexualising me, a senior citizen, and casting aspersions on me, and my character, and the community to which I belong" and also to be charged with human trafficking.

She said she had been "sad and angry" when she learned she was among those targeted. "What kind of mindset do these people have, selling me, an old lady, and other women online?" Parveen asked. "They are trying to silence our voices on social media. We see again how under this government, Muslim women are targets."

Parveen said she felt the auction aimed to punish prominent female Muslim voices, including journalists and activists, who had called out hate speech against Muslims - such as a recent call by Hindu religious leaders, during a religious event in the Hindu holy city of Haridwar, in Uttarakhand, for a genocide of Muslims in India.

"Many of us were on social media, drawing international attention to this hate speech and demanding police cases be filed against the perpetrators," she said. "Then we are all put up for sale on this auction. I think it is an attempt to scare us, make us fearful to raise our voices so we keep quiet. But we are all fighting this together; we will be aggressive for justice."

Hindus From India, US, UAE Pray At 100-Year-Old Temple In Pakistan

The delegation of Hindus consisted of nearly 200 devotees from India, 15 from Dubai, the rest from the US and other Gulf states.

Peshawar, Jan 2: Hindu pilgrims from India, the US and the Gulf region prayed at the 100-year-old renovated Maharaja Paramhans Ji temple in northwest Pakistan on Saturday amidst tight security, one year after the temple was demolished by a mob belonging to a radical Islamist party.

The delegation of Hindus consisted of nearly 200 devotees from India, 15 from Dubai, the rest from the US and other Gulf states. The mandir and 'samadhi' of Paramhans Ji in Teri village, Karak district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa underwent extensive repair last year after it was demolished by an angry mob in 2020, an incident that was condemned globally. The Indian pilgrims crossed over through the Wagah Border near Lahore, and were escorted to the temple by armed personnel, officials said.

The programme has been organised by the Pakistani Hindu Council in collaboration with the national carrier Pakistan International Airlines. On the day, the funerary monument and Teri village at large was fortified with 600 men from the Rangers, Intelligence and Airport Security Force keeping guard, led by a Superintendent of Police rank officer. The rituals will go on through the night till afternoon of Sunday, Hindu Council

officials said. 'Hujras' or open air reception rooms were converted into shelters for the pilgrims.

The markets near the temple were seen buzzing with tourists and the children from the Hindu contingent were photographed playing cricket with the local kids. In-charge, Legal Affairs, Hindu



Pakistan Hindu Council has promoted the initiative under the aegis of "faith tourism"

Community Rohit Kumar commended the Pakistan government for the arrangements and the repair works. "Today's prayers at the mandir by yatis from India is a positive message for India, for promoting peace and religious harmony in the region," he said. The Pakistan Hindu Council has promoted the initiative under the aegis of "faith tourism". Maharaja Paramhans Ji died at Teri village in 1919.

Some members of the radical Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) had vandalised the 'samadhi' on December 30, 2020. The temple had also been demolished in 1997. The provincial government renovated it after Rs. 3.3 crore was recovered from the JUI-F mob.

China protests Indian MPs' attending Tibetan reception, Tibet govt-in-exile fires back

New Delhi, January 1: A week after the Tibetan government-in-exile (Central Tibetan Administration -CTA) hosted a dinner reception for Indian parliamentarians, the Chinese embassy in Delhi lodged a strong protest with the attendees, expressing "concern" over meeting with what they termed a "separatist" organisation. Strangely, the Chinese mission wrote directly to the participants rather than taking up the matter through diplomatic channels with the Ministry of External Affairs.

India Today still awaits a response from the ministry.

At least six MPs had attended the event on December 22 at a hotel in Delhi, including Union MoS for Entrepreneurship, Skill Development, Electronics & Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar, BJP's Maneka Gandhi and K C Ramamurthy, Congress MPs Jairam Ramesh and Manish Tewari, and BJD's Sujee Kumar.

The Speaker of Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, was also

present.

Meanwhile, in response to the missive, the CTA reacted sharply and dismissed China's historical claim over Tibet as

The Chinese embassy lodged a strong protest over Indian MPs' presence at a reception hosted by Tibetan government-in-exile. The letter has evoked sharp reactions from Indian lawmakers and the Tibetan side alike.

"baseless" and "fictitious". CTA spokesperson Tenzin

Lekshay said, "One thing is that the Chinese embassy, in the letter says that Tibet was a part of China since ancient times, which is not true, baseless and fictitious.

Therefore we strongly condemned China, who have not



MPs had attended the event hosted by the Tibetan government-in-exile

been true to themselves. And if you look at the Central Tibetan Administration, they have said it's an illegal entity which is also not true. Over the last so many years, we have had negotiations with Chinese leaders and we are

not a separatist group. Our policy is a middle way policy, it's not about separations, it's about fulfilling the aspirations of the Tibetan people within the framework of the Chinese constitution."

'Security breach': MHA will take 'tough decisions'

New Delhi, Jan 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday briefed President Ram Nath Kovind on the "security breach" that stalled his Punjab visit and the government indicated that some "big and tough decisions" will be taken after the Union Home Ministry gathers information.

Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi claimed that what happened in Ferozepur wasn't a security threat but a "gimmick" aimed at imposing President's Rule on the state.

The Supreme Court also took note of the matter and the Punjab government announced a two-member committee to probe the episode, as the BJP and the Congress continued to spar over it.

BJP leaders offered prayers at temples in different parts of the country for a long life for the PM. They also posted their wishes and prayers for Modi on Twitter,

using the hash tag "LongLive PM Modi".

From Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, political leaders weighed in on the controversy, largely following their party line. Punjab BJP leader met Governor Banwarilal Purohit in Chandigarh, seeking the dismissal of the state's home minister and its police chief.

In what the Centre described as a "major security lapse", Modi's convoy was stranded Wednesday on a flyover due to a blockade by farm protesters in Ferozepur. He returned from poll-bound Punjab without attending any event, including a rally, and the Centre blamed the Congress government in Punjab for the breach. CM Channi, however, claimed that a last-minute change of travel plans by Modi led to the situation. On Thursday, his government constituted a two-member committee to conduct a "thorough probe"



Modi's convoy was stranded on a flyover due to blockade by farm protesters in Ferozepur

into the incident. The panel of retired Justice Mehtab Singh Gill and Principal Secretary, Home Affairs and Justice, Anurag Verma will submit its report on the "lapses" in three days.

In Delhi, Union minister Anurag Thakur indicated that the Home Ministry will act on the security breach. "The home ministry has also spoken about taking action. After gathering information,

whatever steps... big and tough decisions will be taken by it," he told reporters during a briefing on a cabinet meeting. "It is my firm belief that the country's judicial system does justice to everyone and when such mistakes happen, whatever steps need to be taken will be taken," the minister added.

Modi also met President Ram Nath Kovind, who expressed concern over the

security lapse. "President Ram Nath Kovind met Prime Minister Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan today and received from him a first-hand account of the security breach in his convoy in Punjab yesterday," the President's secretariat said on Twitter. "The President expressed his concerns about the serious lapse," it added.

Earlier, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu spoke to the PM and expressed his deep concern over the incident.

Hours after his government announced a probe into the "lapses" in Ferozepur, CM Channi took an aggressive stand at a public meeting in Hoshiarpur's Tanda. He maintained that the security threat claim was "cheap theatrics" that did not behove a leader of the PM's stature. The CM claimed that Modi cancelled his trip because of the "thin" crowd at the rally venue, and there was a "conspiracy" to defame the state. "Yesterday's

gimmick by the PM and his coterie is aimed at imposing President Rule in the state," he said.

In Uttarkashi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said if the safety of the prime minister cannot be ensured, it would be difficult to prevent the "disintegration of the country's democratic institutions."

The Punjab BJP said it did not have any expectations from the probe committee set up by the state government. "The chief minister is the conspirator of this conspiracy. What will this committee set up by his government do?" Punjab BJP president Ashwani Sharma told reporters after meeting the Governor.

The BJP delegation demanded the dismissal of the state home minister-Deputy Chief Minister Sukjinder Singh Randhawa holds the portfolio - and DGP S Chattopadhyay over the lapse.

Taliban to recruit suicide bombers in armed forces UP: Kanpur police commissioner



Taliban fighters walk toward journalists during a protest in Kabul.

Kabul, Jan 7: The Taliban will officially recruit suicide bombers to become part of the army as the militant group tries to contain its biggest security threat from rival Islamic State since forming government in Afghanistan four months ago.

Before sweeping into power last year, the Taliban used suicide bombers as a key weapon to attack and defeat US and Afghan troops in the

20-year war.

Now the group wants to reform and organise the scattered squads of suicide bombers across the country to operate under a single unit and protect Afghanistan, said the Taliban's deputy spokesman Bilal Karimi.

Their main target now would be the local offshoot of the Islamic State, which has carried out at least five major attacks as the Taliban looked to consolidate

Now the group wants to reform and organise the scattered squads of suicide bombers across the country to operate under a single unit and protect Afghanistan, said the Taliban's deputy spokesman Bilal Karimi.

power after the United States, withdrew from Afghanistan in August.

Several of those attacks were carried out by suicide bombers. "The special forces that include martyrdom seekers will be used for more sophisticated and special operations," Karimi said.

Meanwhile, Taliban regime has said that it will not allow fencing by Pakistan along the Durand Line, amid escalating

tensions between the neighbouring countries on the contentious issue of border fencing, a media report said.

"We (Taliban) will not allow the fencing anytime, in any form. Whatever they (Pakistan) did before, they did, but we will not allow it anymore. There will be no fencing anymore," Mawllawi Sanaullah Sangin, commander of the Taliban, told Afghanistan's Tolo News on Wednesday.

UP: Kanpur police commissioner takes VRS to contest on BJP ticket from Kannauj

Asim Arun, who was made the first police commissioner of the city, is originally a resident of Kannauj district of Kanpur division.

Kanpur, Jan 8: Kanpur Police Commissioner Asim Arun has said that he has taken VRS to contest in the upcoming Assembly polls and contest on a BJP ticket from Kannauj Sadar

Kanpur Police Commissioner Asim Arun has said that he has taken VRS to contest in the upcoming Assembly polls and contest on a BJP ticket from Kannauj Sadar in UP. Arun had met UP CM Yogi Adityanath on Saturday and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of the 2022 Assembly

Polls. Asim Arun, who was made the first police commissioner of the city, is originally a resident of Kannauj district of Kanpur division. Asim Arun is a 1994 batch IPS officer. He was born

on 3 October 1970 in Badaun. His father Shri Ram Arun was also counted in the flamboyant IPS of the state. He also held the post of DGP of the state. Asim's mother Shashi Arun is a well-known writer.



On Agriculture India has a lot to learn from less developed countries



The Indian food grain scenario has drastically changed in the last five-six decades: It was a food-deficit country in the 1960s and had to import food grain to feed its people.

The situation was ship-to-mouth: The food grain unloaded from the ship at the port had to be sent to consumers in the shortest time possible. The situation is, however, no longer the same; there has been a substantial increase in food grain production.

Both state and Union governments have enhanced access to food for vulnerable sections of the population with reasonable success. So is it time to feel proud of the achievement yet? What else is in store for us?

We need to learn from international experiences.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has experienced severe food shortages and food inflation in the past. Chemical fertilizers have played a key role in boosting agricultural production. The dependence on chemical fertilizers to boost agriculture production, however, has serious long-term implications. Their dependence has to be reduced in a phased manner.

The Government of Sri Lanka, without taking the required measures, recently decided to shift to organic farming. It decided to replace chemical fertilizer, being used by 90 percent of farmers in the country, with organic manure.

The ban on the import of chemical fertilizers led to a

sharp decline in food grain production and severe inflation in their prices. As a result, the price of rice touched Rs 115 / kg and that of wheat Rs 100 / kg. At the same time, the price of liquefied petroleum gas cylinder crossed Rs 2,500 per unit mark.

The scarce foreign reserves were used to clear the government's debts. The ban on the import of food items and agricultural inputs has affected the agricultural sector. In short, hasty and irrational decisions have led to food shortages and inflation in the country.

Venezuela and Zimbabwe

Irrational policies may lead to economic disasters even in resource-rich countries. The economy of Venezuela, an oil-rich country, was severely

affected due to its irrational policy of distributing highly subsidized food grains and providing unemployment relief, as a result of which people preferred to remain

idle. There is a saying in the Chinese language: It is better to teach a person how to catch a fish rather than give free fish. The foreign entrepreneurs left the country due to the non-availability of workers and remunerative prices. The decline in food imports due to the depletion of foreign reserves led to food inflation. To appease the people, the government started printing currency notes recklessly, which led to hyperinflation. Zimbabwe experienced similar hyper-inflation due to the reckless printing of currency notes.

Food shortage, inflation, irrational policies: What not to do to avoid economic disasters

idle.

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Uruguay

Providing food security to people implies not merely providing major cereals but a balanced food basket as well. Some countries have diversified their agriculture to this end.

Uruguay, for instance, focuses on enhancing dairy products along with traditional crops. The population of the country is only 3.3 million, but

it has 12 million cows. There are about four cows for every person. To monitor its movement every cow has an electronic chip in its ear. Dairy products like milk, curd,

butter, and ghee are exported in large quantities. In the older days, India's wealth was measured in terms of herds of cattle owned by a household. Cattle are important in a tropical country with a pastoral culture.

It may be disastrous for a household having only land if rains fail in a monsoon-dependent country. But, for a household having some cattle along with land can easily survive.

Morocco

Some analysts have cautioned against excessive dependence on chemical fertilizers. Phosphorous is an important input in the production of chemical fertilizers.

About 70-80 percent of known world resources of phosphorous are available only in Morocco. The country may control the production of fertilizer by manipulating the price of phosphorous.

Soil conservation

The method of cultivation

must be environment-friendly and sustainable in the long run. There must be three-six percent organic content in the soil.


Unfortunately, in a state

like Punjab that has a high food grain production, the organic content is below 0.5 percent. Low organic content in soil reduces it to sand. At least a quarter of cultivated land in India is likely to become desert in 10-15 years if this process continues.

The organic content in the soil can be enhanced by adding leaves from tree or animal waste. It may become difficult to increase the organic content in the soil if trees are cut and animals slaughtered.

Therefore, there must be a mandate to maintain a certain proportion of area under trees.

To have environmentally friendly and sustainable agriculture; excessive dependence on chemical fertilizers has to be reduced in a phased manner.

To prevent desertification, the organic content in the soil has to be maintained according to the scientific norms by having an adequate number of trees and an adequate number of cattle herds. 

India-Korea: Piyush Goyal, Yeo Han-Yeo agree to fast-track trade talks

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday met South Korean trade minister Yeo Han-koo here and discussed ways to expedite trade negotiations, including on the planned upgrade of an existing free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries.

In a tweet, Goyal said he discussed with Yeo key issues relating to bilateral trade and investments, reviewed progress on the upgrade of the Comprehensive Economic

Partnership Agreement (FTA), and deliberated on ways to fast-track trade negotiations.

New Delhi has been raising concerns about its trade imbalance with Seoul and market access issues being faced by its exporters there, primarily due to non-tariff barriers.

The bilateral trade has been heavily tilted in favour of Korea. While Korea has successfully reaped the benefits of its free trade agreement with India, which came into force in 2010, Indian

exporters haven't quite benefitted from it. India imported goods worth as much as \$15.7 billion and \$12.8 billion, respectively, from Korea in FY20 and FY21 but its exports to that country stood at only \$4.8 billion and \$4.7 billion during this period. Moreover, Indian exporters have been complaining about huge non-tariff barriers there.

India ships out mainly aluminium, mineral fuels and organic chemicals to Korea and imports steel, capital and consumer




India has been raising concerns about its trade imbalance with Seoul

goods, among others, from there. The substantial trade imbalance has prompted India to plan to review the FTA, formally

called Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Since its pull-out of the Beijing-dominated

RCEP trade negotiations in November 2019, India has been seeking to expedite talks with key economies for "fair" and "balanced" trade pacts. While India has ramped up talks with the UAE, Australia and the UK for FTAs, it has also been exploring the feasibility of either reviewing or upgrading various existing trade agreements.

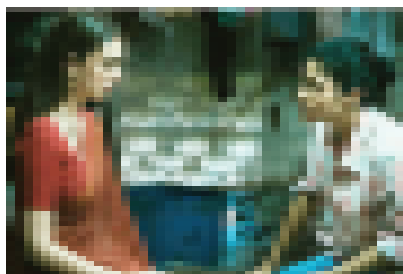
As part of this, India is seeking a review of its FTAs with Asean, Japan and South Korea to make them more balanced. 

The 10 Best Bollywood Movies of 2021

It was only after the state government of Maharashtra announced the opening of cinema halls on October 22, 2021 that theatrical release announcements for some of the most anticipated, big-budget Bollywood films started to roll in one after another. After all, its capital city Mumbai is home to the Hindi film industry. While the rest of the country had already opened theaters earlier in 2021, some at full capacity, Maharashtra allowed a half-capacity opening, noting the substantial decline in COVID spread across the country. Nevertheless, the trend of Hindi films releasing on streaming platforms isn't going away. So 2021 still offered up a wide range of films to check out, at the theater or at home.

Here are our picks for the 10 best Bollywood films of 2021:

Ajeeb Daastaans

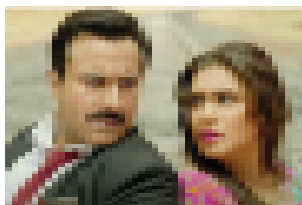


Although there's now a wariness about watching Netflix India anthology films because they prove to be a mixed bag, there are a few reasons to check

out. The first one being the chapter starring Konkona Sen Sharma and Aditi Rao Hydari called Geeli Puchi. Directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, a filmmaker who comes from a Dalit (formerly untouchable) background and has spoken about the lack of Dalit representation in Indian cinema, it tells the story of an evolving friendship between two women. Their complicated relationship addresses issues of caste, class and sexuality with an assured hand.

Bunty Aur Babli 2

When Bunty Aur Babli came out in 2005, there was freshness in the pairing of Abhishek Bachchan and Rani Mukherjee, two A-list actors playing small-time con artists who go bigger with each fraud they manage to pull off. There was smart writing, lilting songs and genuine chemistry between Mukherjee and Bachchan that gave the movie a deft touch. This sequel tries to recreate that magic. Saif Ali Khan replaces Bachchan as Bunty, but Mukherjee reprises her role as the original Babli. The two have been living a retired life, giving up their misadventures as scam artists.



Thalaivii

When she isn't rabble-rousing on Twitter, Kangana Ranaut can be a good actress. She's the main reason to watch Thalaivii, a biopic of the intriguing Tamil film star turned politician Jayalalitha. Is it problematic that a North Indian actress who can't speak Tamil played such an iconic role? Ranaut would likely not even dignify that question with an answer. However, there are many reasons why she's perfect for the role that required her to maintain a sense of aloof dignity and vulnerability.

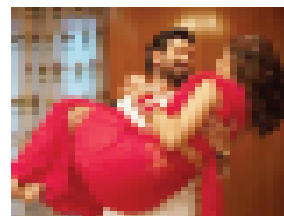


Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui

You could call Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui another one of those steps, despite the many problems it presents. Manu (Ayushmann Khurrana) is a beefed-up gym owner, with a bunch of gym rat friends and a meddlesome family. One day, Zumba instructor Manvi (Vaani Kapoor) saunters into his gym and life. Sparks fly, things get hot and heavy real fast. Except, Manvi is a trans woman, who has had sex reassignment surgery. This revelation has Manu go through a series of crises, while educating the audience about the challenges that Manvi has had to face.



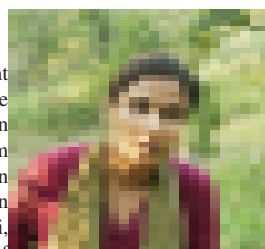
Haseen Dillruba



Haseen Dillruba is played out as a pulpy crime thriller, whose lens is firmly trained on lead actress Taapsee Pannu playing Rani, a newly married woman trying to figure her place in her husband's home. However, its charm lies in following the supporting characters that play her in-laws. Rani marries Rishabh because he seems like a nice-enough guy, especially when the guy she was dating didn't seem to be interested in a long-term commitment. The naïve Rishabh marries Rani, despite his mother's protestations that Rani is too smart for him, because he's smitten.

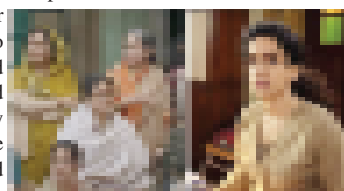
Sherni

You'd be forgiven if you thought that this was a Hindi nature documentary masquerading as a fiction film. Amit Masurkar's previous film Newton was a biting satire on Indian democracy by examining the election process in a remote village. In Sherni, he shows us the copious amount of research he's done into wildlife conservation and tiger poaching—which can be tedious at times. Nevertheless, it was a welcome change to see Vidya Balan play a lead role with understated heft, as the forest officer in charge of a rural area prone to tiger attacks.

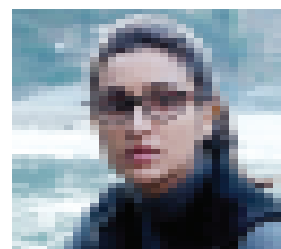


Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi and Pagglait

This is a bit of a cheat two-for-one pick, especially since Pagglait released two months after Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi. However, both stories covered similar ground. (There was also some controversy around the two similarly themed films, and whose idea may have come first—but both are distinct in their own way, and should be watched for their own merits.) The common factor in both films is the gathering of family to mourn the loss of a loved one. In the case of Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi, it's the patriarch of a family; while in Pagglait, it's the young son. You could call Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi an ensemble production, relying on a whole cast of formidable character actors.



Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar



A much anticipated film by critically acclaimed director Dibakar Banerjee (Khosla Ka Ghosla, Love Sex Aur Dhoka, Shanghai), Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar has been described as a black comedy—which is familiar terrain for Banerjee. Expectations are challenged right from their names:

Sooryavanshi

Rohit Shetty has fine-tuned his formula of car chases and cop drama through previous movies Singham and Simmba. A remake of a 2011 Tamil film, Singham starred Ajay Devgn in the role of an honest cop, who regularly breaks the law in order to uphold it. The motto of Shetty's films can be summed up as such: Loha lohe ko kaat-ta hai (loosely translated, iron cuts iron). Given the amount of corruption in the police force, justice is usually meted by bending the rules or downright ignoring them.



Toofaan

Hindi cinema doesn't do full justice to sports movies unless they're about cricket. Even then, Bollywood's scorecard on this front has been pretty dismal. Directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, Toofaan is a mediocre attempt for a film set in the boxing ring that also addresses religious and class differences. Aziz is a small-time gangster turned boxer, who aspires to rise in the boxing ranks.



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