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Editor

**Industry & Mines  
Observer Wishing  
You A Very Happy  
Republic Day-  
2022**



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DADLS-69

ପବିତ୍ର ସାଧାରଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଦିବସ ପାଳନ ଅବସରରେ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଏହି ଅବସରରେ ଆମର ପୂର୍ବପୁରୀ, ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମୀ ଓ ଦେଶପ୍ରେମୀମାନଙ୍କର ଅନୁକମ୍ପା ଡ୍ୟାଗ ଓ ବଳିଦାନକୁ ସ୍ମରଣ କରିବା ସହ ଆମ ସମ୍ବିଧାନର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ, ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ପାଳନକୁ ପରମ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଭାବେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ଏକ ଆଦର୍ଶ ଦେଶ ଗଠନ ପାଇଁ ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ଭାବେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ନିବେଦନ କରୁଛି ।

କୋଭିଡ୍ ମାର୍ଗଦର୍ଶିକା ସଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ଅନୁପାଳନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଛି ।

*(ରଘୁନନ୍ଦନ ଦାସ)*

ଜଳସଂପଦ, ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛତା ଓ ଲୋକସମ୍ପର୍କ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

OIPR-15001/13/0119/2122

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ମାନ୍ୟବର ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳଙ୍କ ବାଉଁ

ପବିତ୍ର ସାଧାରଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଦିବସ-୨୦୨୨ ପାଳନ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଓ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଦେଶର ଏକ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଏବଂ ଅଗ୍ରଣୀ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଏହି ପବିତ୍ର ଅବସରରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଶପଥ ନେବାକୁ ମୁଁ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

*ଶଶେଶୀଳାଲି*

(ଗଣେଶୀ ଲାଲ)

ମାନ୍ୟବର ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/13/0119/2122

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ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

ସାଧାରଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଦିବସ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ  
ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା

ପବିତ୍ର ସାଧାରଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଏକ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଓ ନ୍ୟାୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସମାଜ ଗଠନ ପାଇଁ ଆମର ମିଳିତ ଉଦ୍ୟମକୁ ଆହୁରି ଶକ୍ତିଶାଳୀ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଆଜିର ଦିନରେ ଶପଥ ନେବା ।

ସତର୍କ ରହିବା ଓ କରୋନା ଗାଇଡ୍ ଲାଇନ୍ ମାନି ଚଳିବା ।



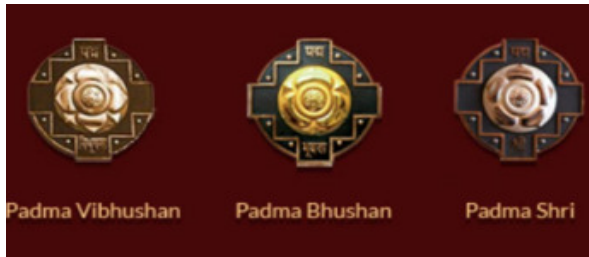
*ନବୀନ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ମହାନ୍ତି*

ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/13/0119/2122



# Padma Awards 2022: Kalyan Singh, Gen Rawat Given Padma Vibhushan; Azad, Buddhadeb Awarded Padma Bhushan



Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and Hindutva poster boy late Kalyan Singh and India's first Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat who died in a helicopter crash

recently were awarded Padma Vibhushan on Tuesday.

New Delhi, Jan 26: Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and Hindutva poster boy late

Kalyan Singh and India's first Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat who died in a helicopter crash recently were awarded Padma Vibhushan on Tuesday, while veteran Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad and former West Bengal CM and CPI(M) leader Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee were given Padma Bhushan.

Cyrus Poonawalla of the Serum Institute of India, which manufactured COVID-19

vaccine Covishield, and Krishna Ella and Suchitra Ella of Bharat Biotech, which produced India's indigenous coronavirus vaccine Covaxin, were also given Padma Bhushan.

Kalyan Singh and General Rawat were given Padma Vibhushan, the country's second-highest civilian award, posthumously.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Google CEO Sundar Pichai were con-

ferred Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian award.

Late Punjabi folk singer Gurmeet Bawa, actor Victor Banerjee, and former Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi have been awarded Padma Bhushan.

Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra and singer Sonu Nigam were awarded Padma Shri. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the President

approved the conferment of 128 Padma Awards, including two duo cases, this year. In a duo case, the award is counted as one. The list comprises 4 Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan, and 107 Padma Shri awards. Thirty-four of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 13 posthumous awardees.

## After Decades of Turbulence, Air India Makes Safe Landing on Tatas' Tarmac

**Air India issued a circular on Thursday for its cockpit crew members containing the new announcement to be read out to all passengers.**

New Delhi, Jan 27: The meeting on Thursday between PM Modi and N Chandra, Chairman of Tata Sons signifies the return of India's iconic carrier to arguably its most prestigious house. The Maharaja has come back full circle. After 7 decades Air India officially touches down at 'home'-the Tatas. Air India issued a

circular for its cockpit crew members containing the new announcement to be read out to all passengers. The new welcome announcement includes Tata group's takeover of the national carrier. Welcome to the future of Air India, it read. Air India became part of the Tata group after 70 years on Thursday. The



The new welcome announcement will be made by all Air India pilots on every flight.

new welcome announcement will take effect from tomorrow, January 28 a day after Air India was officially handed over to the Tata group. "Dear guests, welcome aboard this historic flight, which marks a special event. Today, Air India officially becomes a part of Tata Group again, after seven decades. Welcome

to the future of Air India," the circular read.

The other change will be in the meal services offered on board Air India flights. The airline is already enhancing its meal plans to 'full' for some sectors starting Thursday. The changes will be made across most sectors over time in a phased manner.

## Odisha sculptor to make India Gate Netaji statue

BHUBANESWAR, Jan 23: Noted sculptor Adwaita Gadanayak, who will carve the 28-foot statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in New Delhi's India Gate, said that the grand figurine will reflect the strong and charismatic personality of the great leader.

Gadanayak, a native of Odisha's Dhenkanal district, and the director of National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, said he is very delighted as Prime Minister Modi assigned the task to him.

"I am very delighted that the Prime Minister has assigned the task to me. It seems like after so many years, Netaji will get the long-awaited and rightful honour he deserves. I am so proud that I belong to Odisha where Netaji was born and spent his childhood," said Gadanayak.

"The tall statue will be carved in jet black granite stone to be brought from Telangana. Black granite is the obvious choice for the statue as I feel granite is one of the oldest family members of the planet and the stone witnessed everything that had happened in the past. It is a



Adwaita Gadanayak

difficult medium and a time-taking process but we would try to complete it within the deadline," added the noted sculptor.

A team of artists will start working on the project at the earliest, using both traditional and modern technologies. Gadanayak, an alumnus of B K College of Arts and Crafts, Bhubaneswar, pursued his postgraduation at Slade School of Fine Arts in London in 1995. He won the National Lalit Kala Akademi Award in 1993, Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi Award in 1999 and the Scottish International Sculpture Award in 1996.

Gadanayak's most famous projects include a black marble replica of Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March, the sculpture of the Father of the Nation at Rajghat, the depiction of the Gandhi household, Hriday Kunj, Sabarmati Ashram, and for his installations in London.

## Six Eminent Personalities From Odisha To Receive Padma Awards

In a proud moment for all Odias, as many as 6 eminent personalities from different fields will be receiving the prestigious Padma Awards this year.

The list of awardees of the prestigious civilian award includes eminent litterateur and educationist Pratibha Ray, with Padma Bhushan.

Similarly, Srimad Baba Balia, Pramod Bhagat, Aditya Prasad Dash, Shyamamani Devi, Narasingha Prasad Guru will be receiving Padma



Guru Prasad Mohapatra (Civil Service) from Odisha will also receive Padma Shri (Posthumously). He has been nominated from Delhi.

Shri.

While Ace Para-athlete Bhagat has been honored with Padma Shri under the sports category, Srimad Baba Balia has been bestowed with the prestigious award in the social work category.

Meanwhile, Aditya

Prasad Das will receive the Padma award under Science and Engineering category, while popular singer Shyamamani Devi has been honored for her contribution in the field of art. Similarly, Padma Shri will be conferred to Narasingha Prasad Guru

for his contribution to literature and education.

"I am overwhelmed for being honored with the prestigious award. This will inspire me to continue my social work for life long. The snags we faced while carrying out the works ease with this honor," said Srimad Baba Balia.

Guru Prasad Mohapatra (Civil Service) from Odisha will also receive Padma Shri (Posthumously). He has been nominated from Delhi.

# Budget: Cut I-T to 20 pc, stop PSU sale to boost demand



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

Yet another year of uncertainty begins with difficult finances, not so certain growth and possibly some experimentation by the finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

People have a major expectation. Two years back on September 20, 2019, less than 40 hours before prime minister Narendra Modi's Houston event, the government announced a massive corporate tax rate cut, lowering the base rate to 22 percent from 30 percent, and to 15 percent from 25 percent for new manufacturing companies. Till such time individual and tax rates were in sync.

Now people want that synchronisation is re-established. The

individual income tax rates remain very high at 42 percent and 30 plus 3 percent. It robs an income tax payee of almost 73 to 83 percent of his income. The aspiration is that it be lowered to 20 to 22 percent, possibly ideally as per Chanakyan principles to around 17 percent to help generate demand. The aspiration is because of the difficult three years of covid19 uncertainty, job losses, income contraction and severe inflation at 14.6 percent. One wishes that finance minister listens to them.

She has her problems of constricted finances, not the desired growth or rather uneven growth instead of a high trajectory that could have generated

jobs, increased demand, boosted production and paved the way for demand.

Though she should do that but it is possible she would like to avoid the call. And people should be thankful that she does not introduce her own thought, earlier rejected by many finance ministers, of expenditure tax. The idea evolved by socialists finally was rejected by them. Contraction of spending is not a good idea. Let people spend and those who can save in classical Indian style. The FM should rethink of incentivising savings by asking RBI to raise interest rates. If she does, it would bring back the sustained growth pattern and strengthen Indian families come out of the crisis.

The FM needs to do it. If she had done this before, the government would possibly not have to resort to free food, edible oil and other doles to 80 crore or 61.54 percent of the population. It is a benevolent approach of the government but could have been avoided if the families had the strength. Modi told people of Gujarat on August 3, 2021 that covid19 has caused a body blow to the poor and government spent Rs 2 lakh crore to provide free ration till last November. Now it is extended to March 31 naturally incurring more expenses.

The FM now should through various policy formulations try to

empower the families. It may help the country reduce these expenses in the next four to five years helping the country to invest in many projects and create demand.

The budget would invest in many metro, infra projects, healthcare, railways and ports. It also may take up the issue of regulating crypto currencies. Last year, the new National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID), with a capital base of ₹ 20,000 crore and a lending target of ₹ 5 lakh crore over a three-year horizon was set up. In five years, it targets Rs 111 lakh crore investment.

NaBFID chairman KV Kamath says that it would require Rs 80 lakh crore in 2022-23 to kickstart big ticket projects like high-speed railways, airports, ports, highways, river interlinking for the national infra pipeline. Infra is critical and risky both. Highway investments may go up by 35 percent. The ASEAN had gone bust with high infra investment. It aims to make it up by further asset sales of the PSUs.

It looks interesting but the financial risks cannot be overlooked. The rise of private at the cost of public sector has its ramification. There are proposals for disinvesting 36 PSUs, including Central Electronics, PDIL, LIC,


four major banks by 2024. The funds through sales would only help reduce fiscal deficit. The number of profit-making PSUs was 183 in 2017-18, 179 in 2018-19 before declining to 171 in 2019-20, said industry minister. According to the government's new public sector policy, profit or loss incurred by a PSU is not criterion for disinvestment anymore.

It should also be remembered that the 2007-08 Lehman global meltdown was the handiwork of the private corporate. The Rs 7000 crore Satyam scam in 2009 singed India as well. The FM has to come out with a balanced foolproof system. There are a series of promised projects for poll-bound UP, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Goa and Punjab. The strong 'multiplier effect' of infrastructure spending can be realised, only if it is delivered in a timely manner and is effectively targeted. None should get delayed or stalled.

It has to lay special emphasis on agriculture. Procurements are on the rise but still unable to satisfy farmers. The budget proposes to increase loan limit to Rs 18 lakh. Various infra funding, healthcare, agriculture, small businesses would depend heavily on banks, which are certainly not so comfortable. As per RBI, banks have Rs 8.35 lakh crore NPA. Even there are

plans to allow youth to have loans from banks for entrepreneurship. Looks good. But MUDRA loans' record is not that bright. Bad debts for Mudra loans have spiked for PSBs, and, at the end of 2018-19 (FY19), stand at 9.3 per cent of advances. There has been 71 percent jump in the number of MUDRA loan accounts that have turned non-performing assets (NPA) in Gujarat in 2021.

India has to invest more in healthcare. Last year by mixing figures of Ayush it projected 137 percent increase to Rs 2.23 lakh crore funding up from Rs 94000 crore. It had included Ayush figures too. The real rise was miniscule. Hope FM would take more sincere steps this time as India's public healthcare system remains rudimentary and private system is extremely expensive and exploitative. Despite covid19 situation and now omicron, investment in the sector does not look easy.

Creating jobs and less reliance on the public sector are contradictory. Organisations like PDIL are watchdogs that private or foreign investors detest. Mere infra cannot sustain or boost job demands for long. It has to look how the medium and small industries grow. So far the stress on MSME is a bit lukewarm. The budget has to be more innovative. 



## Double Bonanza For Rourkela

Rourkela city has made its citizens proud by winning two prestigious 'recognitions' - one at national level and another at international level

Smart City Rourkela has won a place among the Top 10 Cities of India as part of the 'Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge' under the aegis of the Smart Cities Mission of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of India.

The Finalists were selected after a thorough evaluation of their proposed and implemented projects by a jury consisting of representatives from MoHUA, BvLF, and independent experts in urban design, early childhood devel-



opment, and behavioral change.

In the first stage of the challenge, the Rourkela Smart City Limited (RSCL) and Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) jointly responded to MoHUA's open call for pro-

posals to implement neighborhood-level pilot projects improving public spaces, streets, transport, and access to services to enhance the health and wellbeing of 0-5-year-old children and their caregivers.

In February 2021, Rourkela was shortlisted by an expert committee from 63 applicant cities across the country. Later 25 selected cities received technical assistance and capacity building to solicit citizen participation, implement trials and pilots, and build

consensus around their proposals.

The program is being done in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation with WRI India as the technical partner. Rourkela Smart City will receive technical assistance for the next 2 years, under the initiative. Accordingly, a host of initiatives had been undertaken by the Rourkela Municipal Corporation to make the city engaging, useful, and fun for children i.e. to make Rourkela a Children Friendly City.

## RSP wins 'Best Integrated Steel Plant' title under SAIL

SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has won the 'Best Integrated Steel Plant' title under SAIL Corporate Awards for excellence-2021. The award recognizes the remarkable overall performance of RSP in the financial year 2020-21.

It is noteworthy that RSP has performed exceedingly well in produc-

tion, productivity, techno-economics, and profitability in the last fiscal and went on to achieve the Annual Business Plan (ABP) targets for the first time in history. The Steel Plant registered the all-time highest production of Hot Metal, Crude Steel, and Saleable Steel in FY'21. RSP was also successful in further improv-

ing its techno-economic to clock the best figures in major areas in the last fiscal. The specific energy consumption, a key techno-economic parameter was also all-time best. All the departments of the plant excelled in tandem to clock several individual records. The incredible performance came amidst one of the

most challenging times during COVID 19 pandemic.

Amarendu Prakash, Director-In-Charge, Bokaro & Rourkela Steel Plant while congratulating each member of Team RSP has said, "I feel so proud of all of you. Let's continue this journey of excellence and set fresh benchmarks in all our endeavors."

## Indian Navy to Use RSP's DMR Steel for Making Sub Marines

A high-level delegation of the Indian Navy led by Rear Admiral R Vishwanathan, PD(SC), ATVP, AKANKSHYA, which included Commodore PR Kulkarni and Captain R K Sehgal, visited Rourkela Steel Plant on 13th January.

The Navy delegation interacted with SR Suryavanshi, executive director (works), and other senior officers of the RSP for commercial production of DMR grade high strength steel is required for making submarines. During the interaction Rear Admiral R Vishwanathan said, "SAIL,

Rourkela Steel Plant has received the certification for producing DMR Grade high strength steel and this steel will be used by Indian Navy for the making of submarines". Senior Officers from the Chief Minister Office and SAIL Corporate Office also attended the meeting virtually.

The Rear Admiral said, "As a policy Indian Navy is using indigenous steel for its ship and submarine building. RSP fulfilling the needs of a tough and meticulous customer like the Indian navy for the last about 10 years,

proves its adherence to stringent quality parameters in its products. The Steel Plant commencing commercial production of the submarine grade steel will further strengthen our association."

It is worth mentioning here that RSP has so far supplied more than 7000 tonnes of tailor-made steel adhering to stringent quality specifications for use in various naval applications.

The Special Plate Plant of RSP which is dedicated to making defence and navy grade steel has been relentlessly working towards de-



veloping newer grades of customized steel that can absorb high ballistic impact.

This high-quality steel is being developed with years of research, technological

and process modifications as well as several rounds of testing.



# Chella Kumar with the PCC fact-finding committee visited Dhinkia village

JAGATSINGHPUR, Jan 27: AICC Odisha in-charge Dr. A Chella Kumar accompanied by PCC fact-finding committee members including Congress leaders Narasingha Mishra, Chiranjib Biswal, Ganeswar Behera, Bapi Sarkhel, Jitu Mohapatra, Ansuman Mohanty, Avishek Mahananda, Rama Chandra Khuntia, Natabar Barik, and Bipalab Choudhry visited trouble-torn Dhinkia village for conducting a spot assessment of the police and civilian clash occurred there on January 14.

The high-level congress delegation was greeted by anti-JSW project residents of Dhinkia village then the team



members inspected the site where the project land acquisition and betel vine demolitions were underway and interacted with villagers with regards to their problems appearing for project launching. The agitating villagers have

fumed that the Odisha government was using police forces to land acquisition and trying to evict villagers from the land. They were holding a peaceful agitation opposing betel vines razing act by JSW authority and civil administra-

tion on January 14. Sadly the authority ignored our demands and started Lathi Charge on agitating villagers including hundreds of women and children as a consequence hundred have received hurt, many have absconded till date,

informed villagers.

Moreover, villagers smelled angst that after police overpowered Dhinkia village began its atrocity, lodged false cases against the villagers, reopened cases against few villagers pending during Posco agitation, as a consequence we are spending despicable live seeking justice, few villagers informed before the Congress team.

While addressing Dhinkia residents, AICC Odisha in charge Dr. Chella Kumar decried the Odisha government and its police forces who attacked villagers and assured residents that the Congress party is sharing their sufferings and woes and stood with them further strengthening

the agitation in coming days.

A 13 opposition political parties delegation led by Congress Seva Dal head Aryakumar Gyanendra visited JSW proposed project site Dhinkia village. The aim of the visiting political leaders described was to study the ground realities after the ill-famous police excess occurred in the village on January 14.

The visiting political leaders were greeted by the villagers who had been opposing the JSW project in their locality, hundreds of villagers accompanied by women, and children converged at Phulakhai temple held interaction with the delegation.

## Villagers threaten to boycott GP polls for basic amenities

JAGATSINGHPUR, Jan 27: Raising voices against sans developmental works, supplying basic amenities, and delivering good governance, residents from two villages in Jagatsinghpur district have threatened to boycott Panchayat polls, in this regard villagers have apprised the district administration.

The excitement in the Panchayat elections is in full swing across the district, the preliminary poll process filing of nominations has begun from January 17 but residents of Jhatipari village under Japa Panchayat in Erasama block have shown a disinclination to participate in the elections.

Villagers' protest due to lack of road connection, drinking water scarcity, scant health service, no

cyclone shelter, dilapidated school building non-supply of PDS articles, and many more to the village.

During the last elections, we had threatened to boycott the Panchayat polls in the year 2017, but we were assured by civil administration and local political leaders that our issues would be sorted out soon after the polls but nothing has happened, rued Alok Maiti another villager.

Sources informed that about 170 families comprising of 600 people mainly fishermen folk have been suffering for years, villages get disconnected during monsoon and at times of medical emergency, the villagers have to lift the patients to reach a

hospital, after super cyclone 1999 a cyclone shelter had built now in a dilapidated condition, nobody bothered its renovation and repair.

Moreover, the Panchayat poll boycott threat has come from the Odisso Panchayat ward number 11 under Jagatsinghpur block, the residents mainly tribal and the ward member post has been reserved for the ST people but nobody turned to file nomination and decided to boycott polls. The villager's grievances were distinguished as non-supply of caste certificate by Jagatsinghpur Tahasil.

Perennially they had categorized as Tribal comes as Matia community, earlier the caste certificate had been given but now

Jagatsinghpur Tahasildar has non-inclined granting caste certificate, as a result, their children are being deprived to avail facilities under several government schemes.

Acting on the discrepancy we have petitioned the district administration and state government but no result received yet so we decided to boycott the upcoming Gram Panchayat elections, informed Ashok Kumar Pradhan. Official sources said that acting on the villager's announcement to boycott polls due to administration apathy to their areas, district administration officials went to convince them to exercise their franchise and assured their problems would be considered soon after elections.

## Five held for looting of microfinance woman staff

JAGATSINGHPUR, Jan 22. The Jagatsinghpur police arrested five persons involved in the microfinance woman staff looting incident that occurred at Odisso village a week ago.

The accused persons were identified as four from the local Odisso village under Jagatsinghpur block and another from Bharatpur under Bhubaneswar police limits.

Moreover, police recovered a gun, cash Rs 32,000, 4 mobile phones, a motorcycle including a microfinance woman employee who stole Activa scooter from the alleged accused men possession.

The report said that the microfinance woman staff was returning office at Jagatsinghpur town after collecting loan dues from the SHG in Odisso village, while five motorcycle-borne miscreants waylaid her and snatched her away the cash bag booming with sum Rs 63,000 and her Activa moped. A snatching case was registered in Jagatsinghpur police station following a complaint by the finance company.

## Plus two students stage Demo, demand revoking annual examination

JAGATSINGHPUR Jan 27: Hundreds of plus two students from as many as 12 junior colleges across the district were converged at Collector office parade ground here and staged a demonstration demanding cancellation of annual plus two examinations on Thursday. The agitated students urged due to Covid 19 pandemic, the colleges have not functioned habitual, their courses have not finished during classroom study, and the virtual classes have not connected with hundreds of students due to technical hurdles so we are unable to seat for annual plus two examination and demand its cancellation. Moreover, students claimed that they have appeared three terminal examinations till December 2021, by taking marks of terminal examinations their final year examination should evaluate, students demanded.

## 73th Republic Day celebrated in Jspur



JAGATSINGHPUR Jan 27. The district-level 73rd Republic Day was celebrated at Nabakrushna Choudhury

Stadium here, state tourism and culture minister Jyoti Prakasha Panigrahi attended the event as chief guest, unfurled the National tricolor,

witnessed the ceremonial parade, and addressed the gathering. The few medico fraternities of district headquarters hospital and municipality employees who had delivered admirable service during the Covid 19 pandemic were felicitated by the chief guest on the occasion. district collector Parul Patwari, SP Akhleshwar Singh, ADM Jagatsinghpur, project director DRDA, sub-collector, senior cops Umesh Kumar Panda, Rajanikanta Samal, DIPRO Kaminiranjan Patnaik, BDO, and Tahasildar Jagatsinghpur attended the celebration.



# Revival of tourist site and breeding centre at Ramtirtha demanded



Baripada, Jan 28: When tourists visit Similipal, one of the largest national parks of the country also move to the breeding center at Ramtirtha taking it as a tourist site. For the last ten years, the breeding center has found tourists losing interest.

It is one of the oldest centers in the State, after a survey in the 1970s revealed a sharp decline in the number of crocodiles in Similipal forest, the State Government decided to set up a center at Ramtirtha for captive breeding of crocodiles. In 1979, the center started functioning and 24 crocodiles

consisting of both males and females were brought from Madras. The main objective of the breeding center was to restore the feasible population of crocodiles of different breeds and supply the reptiles to other States for further breeding.

In 1984, the first crocodile breeding was proficient at the center and since then at least 1,500 eggs were hatched. As many as 700 young crocodiles had been released to the rivers of East Deo, West Deo, Khairi, Budhabalanga, and Polpala. According to official sources, the crocodiles lay eggs in

March. At one go, the reptiles can lay up to 40 eggs. The last census, which was carried out in 2003, revealed that more than 150 Muggers were shifted to different river systems under the Similipal biosphere.

In 2012, the center had an abode of 11 crocodiles of which four were adults. While three females succumbed due to old age, a male died due to injuries sustained in an attack by a female crocodile.

In 2014, the crocodiles laid 22 eggs and only two eggs hatched naturally when the remaining eggs were damaged due to any cause. There eight

crocodiles were kept in the center and no egg was laid from 2015 to 2016. For infighting, two female crocodiles died in 2018. Currently, it is home to six crocodiles. While four are males and four females.

Range officer of Ramtritha said two staffs are looking after the crocodile. This year a crocodile laid an egg but it was damaged. Last year the Government allocated a fund of Rs.4 lakh being utilized for the repair and construction of pools.

Deputy Director of STR North, Saikiran said that time the department is caring on nutrition, de-warming, and health check-up by the veterinary doctors and give importance to their natural breeding.

To attract tourists, Jashipur Ex-MLA Sambhu Nath Nayak urged that the State Government should allocate funds for the revival of the breeding center. He also brought attention to the State Government in this regard several times in the past.

## Socio-cultural outfit demands Mayurbhanj district to be an Union Territory

Baripada, Jan 23: Bhanja Sena, a district-based socio-cultural outfit of tribal-dominated Mayurbhanj on Sunday demanded the tribal district to be a part of Union Territory.

The members of the outfit observed the 24th of its foundation day on Sunday. The founder of the outfit Kalinga Keshari Jena told in a press meeting that stretches within an area of 3,702 sqkm Goa was given the status of a union territory, in comparison, Mayurbhanj district is larger than Goa with an area of 10,418 sqm. He urged that the district remains neglected by the government. The district has a vast area of forest, mineral wealth, and provides huge revenue to the government, the people of the district are deprived of basic facilities like health, education, road, water, and electricity as well as there is a crisis of jobs for people.

Niman Tripathy, Pintu Maity, Manash Kumar Bhera, and the organizers of the outfit had demanded the same for the development of the district.

# Delay in functioning of Haldia Dam in Mayurbhanj district may be an issue of the panchayat polls

Baripada, Jan28: Delay in construction work of century-old Haldia Dam, one of the major irrigation projects may be an issue for the upcoming three-tier-Panchayat ballot in the Mayurbhanj district. Thousands of farmers were depending on the dam to irrigate their lands are deprived of this facility for the last eleven years. This problem has been rising since the government upgraded the dam in 2011, said local farmers.

To cater to the water crisis during the Kharif season, the dam has been providing water through canals systems for irrigating facility to 2,429 hectare lands mostly come within Baiganbadia,

Dumurdiha, Marangtandi, Kautunmari, Haldia Gram Panchayats along with their adjoining areas. The water is also used for the Rabi season where hectares of land produce groundnut as a profitable crop. But for the last 11 years, not a drop of water was received from the dam for the Rabi season due to its up-gradation.

The local farmers alleged that despite their urging before the district administration concerned department, and ministers for the immediate completion of the project it could not yield any result due to their lack of interest.

The dam comes under the Bangiriposi Constituency and Sudam Marandi the Rev-



enue Minister was elected as MLA from it, has not paid any heed over the status of the project. The local farmers threaten that the right answer will give in the panchayat election. Many farmers of the block are unhappy particularly on the issue, they said.

Contacted, the Executive En-

gineer of Mayurbhanj Irrigation Department, Engineer Narayan Das said that Government has provided Rs. 270 crore for the up-gradation of the dam that started 11 years back, presently four parts of works have been carried by a construction agency, are earth dam, spill wall, two regulators both left and right canals

and bridge. The target was fixed to irrigate over 5,520-hectare lands initially, and later it will cover more lands where farmers of both Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts will be benefited. The canals of the dam would be connected with the Subarnarekha Irrigation Project.

It was targeted to complete the project in March and it will be fully functional from June of this year, the officer said.

The report said the Haldia dam was constructed by Raja Maharaja of Mayurbhanj during the 1st decade of the twentieth century in the Budhabalanga basin across Chipat nalla for providing Irrigation to 2,429-hectare lands, mostly under the Kuliana block of the district. After the merger of the Mayurbhanj State with Orissa in 1949, the maintenance of the project came under the works department first and next under Mayurbhanj Irrigation Department.



## BJP Rakes Up OBC Candidature Card In Odisha Panchayat Polls

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) brought forth the issue of OBC candidature once again following the release of the final list of candidates to contest the three tier Panchayat polls in Odisha.



BJP's Suratha Biswal Rakes Up OBC Card

Bhubaneswar, Jan 27: Following the release of the final list of candidates who will contest the three tier Panchayat polls in Odisha, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) brought forth the issue of OBC candidature once again on Thursday.

Accusing the BJD-led Odisha government of largely ignoring the Other Backward Class (OBC) in the election, Suratha Biswal, president of the BJP OBC Morcha in Odisha, said that the ruling party had earlier promised to allot 40 percent seats to the OBCs, "But it is still unclear whether they have delivered on their promise or not."

"As far as the BJP is concerned, I can assure that our party has given chance to OBCs in 50 percent of seats in Zilla Parishads," said Biswal.

He also accused the State government of cheating the OBC community by not doing enough to provide them reservations in the Panchayat polls. "I demand the government

to not repeat this mistake in the civic polls," warned Biswal.

Similarly, Congress MLA, Suresh Routray also accused the State government of neglecting the interests of the backward class. Speaking to reporters, Routray said, "Both the BJD and BJP are resorting to lies for votes. Their promises are only hogwash." "We have given tickets to OBC candidates in 58 percent of ZP seats," claimed Routray.

Earlier in December last year, the BJP had alleged that the Odisha government should have moved to the Supreme Court after the Orissa High Court rejected its plea for OBC reservation in Panchayat elections. But it did not. "The government wants to keep the OBCs away from the Panchayat polls by showing the High Court's 50 percent reservation rule," the BJP had stated earlier. It is pertinent to mention here that the cap on total reservation has been marked by the Supreme Court at 50 percent.

Meanwhile the State Election Commission (SEC) has declared party-wise breakup of Zilla Parishad candidates in Odisha.

There are 3407 candidates in fray for total 852 zones, out of which 851 are contesting on BJD ticket, 848 from BJP, 836 from Congress, 159 from BSP, 38 from CPI, 72 from CPI(M), 32 from AAP, 12 from AJSU, 47 from JMM, 214 others and 298 candidates are fighting independently.

## Young Satraps In Front Seat As Veterans Take Backroom

With the understanding that voters in 18-40 age group prefer young leaders over elder ones, some senior and seasoned politicians of the ruling dispensation and Opposition parties in the State have entrusted their sons with the task of ensuring victory for the party candidates in the forthcoming Panchayat elections.

And the young cubs are going the extra mile to not let down their aging fathers.

These days Biplab Patro, son of Speaker Surya Narayan Patro, is busy preparing a blue print to ensure the victory of all BJD candidates contesting from his father's Assembly constituency: Digapahandi and Rangeilunda Blocks. A confident junior Patro said his party will register victory in 67 out of 69 Zilla Parishad zones in Ganjam district. "I am referring to 67 ZP seats because I have information that we are likely to face contest in the rest two seats. But, we are hopeful that we will pip the Oppositions at the post in those two seats as well," Patro claimed.

Prayaskanti Samal and Pranatikanti Samal are the young leaders who have taken the responsibilities off their father and Bhandaripokhari MLA Prafulla Samal. "People's love for our father is intact. Because of Covid-19 situation, he has curtailed his movement. But his directions count a lot for us. Whenever

And the young cubs are going the extra mile to not let down their aging fathers



we have any problem or confusion, we turn to him," Prayaskanti said.

BJD's senior leader Ananga Udaya Singhdeo's son Arkesh Narayan Singhdeo is putting his heart and soul into the elections. He is sweating it out day in day out to make sure of their candidates' victory. "As all of us know, the daily cases of Covid-19 are on the rise. We are concerned about his (Ananga Udaya Singhdeo) health. He may appear during the last ten days to the election," said Arkesh.

Similarly, Nihar Behera, son of former Minister Jogendra Behera, is not behind either. "We are going to ex-Ministers, ex-MLAs, ex-MPs, members of Biju Yuva Janata Dal and Biju Mahila Janata Dal to seek their suggestions. My father has assured me of extending all sup-

ports in managing the show," Behera said.

Bolangir MLA and senior Congress leader Narasingha Mishra's son Samarendra Mishra also needs mention. He is leaving no stone unturned to ensure the win of the candidates contesting on Congress tickets. "Bolangir has seen a sea-change after my father's victory from the Assembly constituency. No election can be fought without mentioning about development," maintained Samarendra.

Giving responsibilities to their sons, the seniors are not only safeguarding their fortresses but also giving the next generation the much needed opportunity to hone skills to walk in the slippery path of electoral politics in the hinterlands of Odisha.

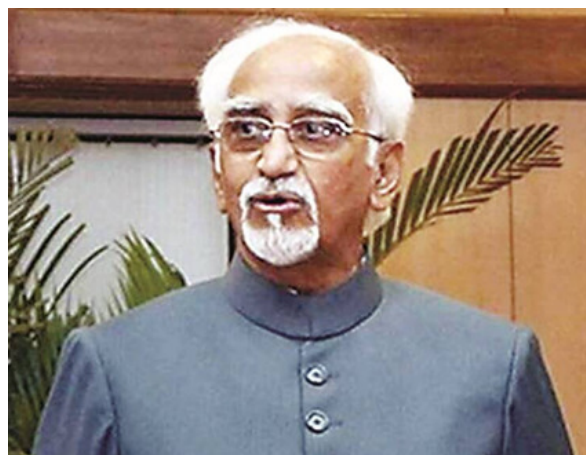
## Former VP Ansari, four US lawmakers express concern over human rights situation in India

Participating in the panel discussion from India, former vice president Ansari expressed his concern over the rising trend of Hindu nationalism

New Delhi, Jan 27: Former vice-president Hamid Ansari and four US lawmakers have expressed concern over the current human rights situation in India. They were speaking at a virtual panel discussion organised by the Indian American Muslim Council on Wednesday. India has rejected criticism by foreign governments and human rights groups on allegations that civil liberties have eroded in the country. Participating in the panel discussion from India, former vice president Ansari expressed his concern over the rising trend of Hindu nation-

alism.

"In recent years, we have experienced the emergence of trends and practices that dispute the well-established principle of civic nationalism and interpose a new and imaginary practice of cultural nationalism. It wants to distinguish citizens on the basis of their faith, give vent to intolerance, insinuate otherness, and promote disquiet and insecurity," he alleged. The three other Congressmen who spoke during the panel discussion - Jim McGovern, Andy Levin and Jamie Raskin - have traditionally taken anti-India stands



Ansari speaking at a virtual panel discussion organised by the Indian American Muslim Council

irrespective of the governments in power in New Delhi. "There have been a lot of problems with the issue of

religious authoritarianism and discrimination taking place in India," Raskin said. "So we want to make sure that India stays on the path of respecting religious liberty, freedom, pluralism, toleration and dissent for everybody," he added.

"Regrettably, today, the world's largest democracy is seeing backsliding, human rights under attack and religious nationalism. Since 2014, India has fallen from 27 to 53 on the Democracy Index. And Freedom House has downgraded India from free to partly free," Levin said. McGovern, co-chair of the

powerful Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the US House of Representatives, listed several warning signs that showed India's "alarming backsliding" on human rights, according to a media release issued by the Indian American Muslim Council. The Indian government has asserted that India has well-established democratic practices and robust institutions to safeguard the rights of all. The government has emphasised that the Indian Constitution provides for adequate safeguards under various statutes for ensuring the protection of human rights.



# Tsunami Of Freebies Before Odisha Rural Polls



Sirish C. Mohanty

**Odisha government kept on showering their favours to different segments of the voters ranging from Anganwadi workers to overaged aspirants for government jobs.**

Ahead of the panchayat polls ruling party geared up speedily to reach its vote bank with attractive schemes. Following this, a spree of popular schemes is thrown to the public to show its pro-people governance. It happens in politics and everywhere. In Odisha of course the scene is a bit different and ahead of the time. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik undertook such as exercise quite in advance, leaving the two opposition parties- the Congress and the BJP sulking in their hives.

Be it post Covid financial assistance in the shape of Rs 1000 stimulus, or packages of Rs 3000 for pavement vendors or interim assistance for PMRY workers or in Biju Pucca Ghar Yojna, cannot be wished away as mere freebies although technically they are. For which the party in power draws criticism dubbed as aerobatics for votes. This time the government is not doing any new or extra favour but a piece of morally driven impetus now seems wrapped in poll colours.

Whereas the two opposition parties are busy in carpet pulling and taking to the streets, sloganeering on issues like Mamita Meher or BSKY, and so on. They have hardly anything

to outsmart the pro-people initiative by the BJD. That is where the BJD had the advantages and it may pay ultimately. So Panchayat polls have offered a chance for many political parties to turn the streets a collage of hopes and the BJD is at that.

Govt spearheaded various welfare schemes before the election to keep the voters intact and happy. Chances of winnability multiplied with popular schemes. These schemes are focused on the minor section of society mainly farmers, laborers, marginal people, and so on. But this time apart from them some other sections attract the Govt attention. They are teachers, OBCs, frontline warriors and many more are on the list. To ventilate their grievances it has come forward with lucrative sops to appease them before the election.

Teachers' protest in the state is a burning issue. Before the opposition hijacks the matter into

its favour it doused the anger with the hike in salary by 50%. On another side, it also meticulously handles the sensitive issue of not allocating a 27% quota to OBC in the Panchayat election. To manage the situation it negotiates the same by increasing OBC candidate upper age limit in state civil exam from 32 to 38 ages.

The government kept on showering their favours to different segments of the voters ranging from Anganwadi workers to overaged aspirants for government jobs. Some favours costing hundreds of crores of rupees to the state exchequer kept rolling out of Naveen Government's gift box without even a demand for it. One such favour merits a discussion.

Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana is a state plan scheme introduced in 2014 to give effect to the state government's commitment to providing pucca houses to all the rural households living in

kutchra houses. The detailed government guidelines on the subject issued in 2017 superseding earlier instructions make it clear that the expected life of the structure must be a minimum of thirty years. Strangely, however, the government decided to give Rs 3000 to beneficiaries to repair their houses allotted to them under the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana. No one had asked for it; nor was it known why Rs 3000 would be the right amount. The government also announced that those who have not yet availed houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) would get Rs 5000 to carry out repairs of the houses. Nearly 30 lakh people would benefit from the announcement, and around Rs, 1,444 crores will be spent in this regard.

Some of the decisions taken immediately before the Election announcement transcend logic. One case is about making overaged aspirants eligible for government jobs. It was clarified that since the recruitment process got held up for two years due to the unprecedented situation arising out of the pandemic, age relaxation was considered necessary. But the 5-years age relaxation to compensate recruitment held up for two years is difficult to understand. That this concession is valid for only three years makes it look clumsy.

The Naveen era has been in the state for over two decades. The party led by Naveen Patnaik has fought many elections and has won decisively. Against this backdrop, why has the run-up to the present Panchayat Election

been marked by a tsunami of financial concessions and favours costing the government thousands of crores of rupees, raises the issue of political morality - enticing voters through government generosity and diverting huge chunks of government resource for winning elections.

A developed State after 22 years of rule by Naveen Patnaik would have been an appropriate legacy; but unfortunately, even now, the state government has identified as many as 96.5 lakh families (out of a total of 97.5 lakh families in the state) under the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana as economically vulnerable families and about 55 lakh families are getting one rupee rice for being poor. Reckless spending taxpayer's money on freebies could win elections, but does not bring in the holistic development of the state.

Although this attitude is common with all-party functionaries before the election in the name of the people's Govt. Both the ruling and the opposition played the same music before the election. This deceptive attitude is commonly found with both. It must not be encouraged by voters. A voter should judge the purpose of the offer and play accordingly to meet their judicious demand. They should not be moulded easily by cheap freebies in the pretext of welfare. But in this climate of pandemic fear and financial crisis, the people favor some hope and help in whatever shape. By doing that people won't mind giving the repeat feat of 2017 rural polls or better this time.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

In your editorial, you have nicely coined five parameters as 5 S, namely Stability, Schemes, Solidarity, Shock therapy, SHG, which immensely contributed

towards the tremendous success of the BJD govt headed by Naveen Patnaik.

Of course, you have extolled the political sagacity of Naveen Patnaik for adopting the novel formula of 5 S, similar to popular

5 T to strengthen the party organization as well as refurbish his popular image.

But, in contrast, your special story has projected the grim picture as well as dismal performance of Odisha govt in

governance index which speaks volumes of the ground realities of development despite tall claims of govt.

As you have predicted, the result of the Panchayat election would usher in a dramatic

change both in the party organization set up and coterie to keep the party fortress as strong as before.

**Bharat Patra**  
Rtd. Banker & Social  
activist, Keonjhar.



# The 73<sup>rd</sup> year of Constitution; it's time to rectify it



Sirish C. Mohanty

The Constitution of India is the largest in the world. India's Constitution is the supreme rule of law. The document sets out the framework for the demarcation of fundamental political code, structure, procedures, powers, and responsibilities of government institutions and sets out fundamental rights, guidelines, and citizens' duties. The chairman of the drafting committee, B.R.

people to amend the constitution. This is followed by the constitution of the U.S, Canada, and Australia. The Flexible procedure is where the amendment can be done in the constitution.

The Indian Constitution is rigid and flexible, i.e. hard to amend but virtually flexible. In compliance with Article 368 of the Indian Constitution, a provision must be made in any of the houses, which must be passed by a large majority or by a simple majority later. If a vote approves the resolution, it will be submitted to the president for his assent. In 70 years of Indian Independence, the constitution has been amended 104 times. Starting with 395 Articles and 8 Schedules, it now stands at



is with the approval of a special majority and by half the total state.

Time is not static, it's continuing to change. The Constitution needs to be revised. People's social, cultural, and political situation is starting to shift. If the constitutional changes were not made, we would not be able to encounter future difficulties and it would become a hurdle in the path of development. There is an explanation of why our founding fathers made the constitution as robust as it is today. It is to ensure the plans are changing with the country's growth. Therefore, according to Article 368, Parliament's powers to amend the constitution are unlimited in respect of parts of the constitution which it wishes to amend.

## The basic structure of the Indian Constitution

In the early 1970s, the then PM Indira Gandhi-led government had enacted major amendments to the Constitution (the 24th, 25th, 26th, and 29th) to get over the judgments of the Supreme Court in RC Cooper (1970), Madhavrao Scindia (1970) and above mentioned Golak Nath case. In the RC Cooper case, the court had struck down Indira Gandhi's bank nationalisation policy, and in Madhavrao Scindia it had annulled the abolition of privy purses of former rulers.

All the 4 amendments -- 24th (fundamental rights, 1971), 25th (property rights, 1972), 26th (privy purses, 1971), 29th (land reform acts, 1972), as well as the Golak Nath judgment, came under chal-

lenge in the Kesavananda Bharati case.

In the Kesavanand Bharati case of 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that the Parliament could not change certain provisions which constitute the basic constitutional framework. Constitutional ideologies are essential to constitutional survival. Some examples are Free and Fair Election, the nation's Federal nature, Judicial Review, and Power Separation. It notes that some basic legislative frameworks and founding values constitute the foundation of the Constitution. These cannot be touched by anyone.

Indira Gandhi's government struck back against the Kesavananda Bharati verdict. Chief Justice of India S M Sikri retired the day after the verdict. Justice AN Ray, who was among the six dissenting judges succeeded him and became the 14th CJI superseding Justices Shelat, Grover, and Hegde, who were on the side of the majority in the case. The case was again reopened as Attorney General Niren De moved to the Supreme Court, however, no review petition was filed. A 13-judge Bench was constituted to review the verdict by CJI Ray, as Master of the Roster. However, on November 12, 1975, the Bench was dissolved after CJI Ray yielded to immense peer pressure. The 'basic structure doctrine has since been interpreted to include the supremacy of the Constitution, the rule of law, Independence of the judiciary, the doctrine of separation of

powers, federalism, secularism, sovereign democratic republic, the parliamentary system of government, the principle of free and fair elections, welfare state, etc.

## Outcomes and implications of the judgment:

The 39th Amendment prohibited any challenge to the election of the President, Vice-President, Speaker, and Prime Minister, irrespective of electoral malpractice. This was a clear attempt to nullify the adverse Allahabad High Court ruling against Indira Gandhi. The 41st Amendment prohibited any case, civil or criminal, being filed against the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, or the Governors, not only during their term of office but forever. Thus, if a person was a governor for

shaken.

Although having provisions to amend the constitution was progressive to the fathers of our nation, such provisions mustn't be misused. Misuse could lead to undue legislative or executive authority that could rip apart the fabric of our society. Indians may not always know all the procedural details of this lengthy and imperfect document, but they know the core - that it's not the whims of political greed that governs them, but the constitutional words. And on Republic Day, this is worth celebrating.

Article 368 is vague on whether or not the parliament has the right to change the basic structure, but this still does not mean this Article 368 imposes the re-



Members of the Constituent Assembly signing copies of the Constitution, in 1950.

Ambedkar, is generally regarded as the chief architect. The Constitution declares India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic, ensuring justice, equality, and freedom for its citizens, and endeavoring to promote brotherhood.

The original Constitution of 1950 is stored in the Parliament House in New Delhi in a helium-filled situation. During the Emergency the words 'secular' and 'socialist' were added to the preamble in 1976. It was adopted by the Indian Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949 and took effect on 26 January 1950. Article 368 of the Indian constitution lays that the government can amend the constitution. There are two types of amendment procedure - (i) Rigid and (ii) Flexible. Under the rigid system, it is very difficult for the

more than 450 Articles and 12 Schedules - arising from 104 amendments.

## Amendment of Indian Constitution - Article 368

Under Article 368 of the Indian Constitution, the Parliament is empowered to amend it and its procedures. Amendments to the Indian Constitution are not easy to produce and require compliance with other provisions. Article 368 grants Parliament some powers allowing it to amend it while keeping its fundamental form just the same. Article 368 of the Constitution of India cites two types of amendments to the Constitution of India. The form of amendment is by a simple legislative majority (Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha), the second type of amendment is by a special parliamentary majority, and the third type



Indira Gandhi destroyed constitution by amending the preamble

just one day, he acquired immunity from any legal proceedings for life.

Though young, over those seven decades, the Indian Constitution has undergone tremendous change. Such amendments have modified main elements of the constitution, such as human freedoms, federalism, political participation, judicial scrutiny, etc. Such amendments were not usually introduced to strengthen constitutional rights. India's constitutional trajectory over the past seventy years - the weakening of our fundamental freedoms, the reforms made to our political structure, the role of fundamental degradation played by numerous institutions, and the struggle to defend the constitutional ethic. This democracy has its backbone in the Constitution which was

striction on the modification of the basic structure and Part III of the Constitution. The First Amendment, crafted by the Constitution's framers, set the tone for the future. It was clear that, if there were good intentions, it was acceptable to use Constitutional amendments to remove government constraints. The conditions that led to 104 institutional changes and hundreds of interpretational amendments will make one miserable. Nevertheless, the Constitution lasted seven decades despite various attacks by Parliament and the judiciary. Nevertheless, time has witnessed a sea of changes in the country, the Constitution of the country has to be synchronized through a change in the future if not immediately.



# Poor Country With Affluent Elite, India Is Going Nowhere

India is now one of the most unequal countries for both income and wealth

The Paris-based World Inequality Lab has become a major source of data on global inequality, based on a careful aggregation of national data from a multitude of sources, of both income and wealth inequality, at national, regional, and global levels. Their latest World Inequality Report 2022 is an eye-opener, even for those who know that economic inequality has increased massively in recent years. It shows that globally, inequality is now as great as it was at the pinnacle of Western imperialism in the early 20th century. The process began nearly four decades ago but worsened during the pandemic, which sharply exposed and amplified existing inequalities.

India is now one of the most unequal countries for both income and wealth inequality - and has shown the most rapid increases in inequality. This emerges even though, as the report laments, "Over the past three years, the quality of inequality data released by the government has seriously de-

teriorated, making it particularly difficult to assess recent inequality changes." We know that the central government has tended to suppress inconvenient information and manipulate data, refusing to release the results of the 2017-18 national consumer expenditure survey and playing fast and loose with definitions to artificially increase the number of 'formal' workers.

Despite these desperate efforts to hide the actual patterns, certain trends are unmistakable. By 2020, the income share of the bottom half of the Indian population was estimated to have fallen to only 13%, while the top 10% captured 57% of national income and the top 1% alone got 22%.

In terms of wealth distribution, the reality is even starker. We know that the past few decades have been a period of increasing wealth concentration globally: the top 1% captured nearly two-fifths of all global wealth growth. The wealth of the top 52 billionaires (which include our home-



grown Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani) increased by nearly 10% each year between 1995 and 2001. In India, the rate of increase of private wealth and its concentration at the top has been even sharper. The poorest half of the population have less than 6% of the wealth, the top 1% grab more than one-third, and the top 10% nearly two-thirds.


The pandemic was a particularly happy period for the extremely wealthy as another recent report on inequality from Oxfam points out - the wealth of the 10 richest men in the world doubled, while 99% of the world's people are

worse off. One of the biggest increases in wealth was that of Gautam Adani, whose wealth multiplied eight-fold during the pandemic. Oxfam notes that he made use of state connections to become the country's largest operator of ports and its largest thermal coal power producer, wielding market control over power transmission, gas distribution, and now privatized airports - all once considered public goods.

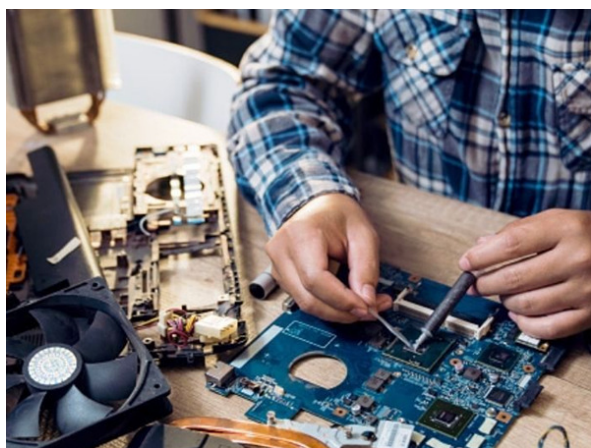
The increase in private wealth has been associated with a decline in public wealth, which is a piece of bad news for the government wishing to increase spending on citizens

based on returns from public assets. For India, the World Inequality Report estimates that the ratio of private wealth to national income increased from 290% in 1980 to 555% in 2020, one of the fastest such increases in the world, throughout history.

India fares badly on other indicators of inequality as well. Women's share of labor income, at 18%, is around half the global average, according to this novel estimate. This will come as no surprise to those who know how badly India treats its unpaid and underpaid women workers, even as the economy remains critically reliant on their work. Another shock is the extreme inequality in carbon footprint within the country. On the face of it, India has very low carbon emissions per capita, at 2.2 metric tonnes per person per year. But this masks the fact that the bottom half of the population emits only 1 metric tonne per year, while the top 1% richest Indians emit 32.4 tonnes on average. That's more than three times

the annual average carbon emissions of the bottom half of the US population, and more than six times the emissions of the bottom half in Europe. Controlling the carbon emissions of the Indian rich would contribute greatly to reducing overall emissions, something that is rarely if ever mentioned in discussions by Indian policymakers. Globally and within India, inequality is not just killing people but destroying the planet. We know that inequality is multidimensional: the income poor are more likely to live in poorer areas, to be women or girls, to belong to socially discriminated castes and communities, to be informal workers. More likely, therefore, to be unable to influence policy. No wonder the World Inequality Report finds that India stands out as a poor and very unequal country, with affluent elite. Unfortunately, history tells us that such countries rarely progress very much. Radical redirection of policies is therefore essential for any real progress to occur. 

## Electronics production in India to reach \$300 billion by 2026: Report



New Delhi, Jan 24: Electronics production in the country is expected to reach USD 300 billion by 2026, industry body ICEA said in a report on Monday. The National Policy on Electronics (NPE) 2019 had set a target of achieving a turnover of USD 400 billion by 2025. However, the industry will be

unable to achieve the target set by NPE 2019, due to the adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the sector, the report said, adding that "the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it unforeseen and unprecedented challenges."

"The NPE 2019 targets for electronics production in 2025-26 at USD 300 billion appears

to be more realistic considering the disruption on account of COVID-19 in the past 18 months which has been aggravated with the new variants of

changes in the tax tariff without consultation with the industry.

Mohindroo said that there is a need to encourage domestic

**However, the industry will be unable to achieve the target set by NPE 2019, due to the adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the sector**

the COVID-19 virus such as Omicron," the report said. The India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) Chairman Pankaj Mohindroo while sharing the details of the report said that the reduced target still aims for a 400 per cent increase from the current level, which will require significant and persistent policy initiatives and efforts to create a conducive electronics manufacturing ecosystem. He said that the government should not make any

champions. The report estimates demand for electronic products in India may stand at approximately USD 180 billion by 2025-26.

"If India is able to achieve the manufacturing target of USD 300 billion for electronics, the domestic market demand may be met in full by such manufacturing. This necessitates that USD 120 billion worth of electronic products would be required to be exported to the global market," the report said. 

## Andhra family arranges grand feast for future son-in-law with 365 dishes

Narsapuram, Jan 18: Sankranti is a big festival (Pedda Panduga) in Andhra Pradesh. It witnesses families returning to their native places to celebrate the Bhogi- Sankranti-Kanuma. However, a family in Narsapuram of west Godavari did something unique to celebrate the festival and it has become the talking point on social media. They arranged a grand feast for their future son-in-law and the menu was pretty elaborate.

The family served their future son-in-law a royal feast and the menu boasted of 365 items. In Telugu tradition, it is customary to invite the son-in-law to the annual harvest festival and this family showed their love for their future son-in-law by preparing 365 dishes. The elaborate food menu consisted of 30 different varieties of curries, rice, biryani, pulihora, 100 different types of traditional and modern sweets, 15 different types of ice creams, pastries, cake, hot and cold beverages and fruits. Krishna district native T Subrahmanyam and Annapurna fixed the marriage of their son Saikrishna to gold trader Atyam Venkateswara Rao and Madhavi's daughter Kundavi of west Godavari. To celebrate the festival, the bride's grandfather Achanta Govind and grandmother Nagamani decided to give their grandson-in-law and his family a lavish welcome. Immediate family members of both bride and the groom also participated in celebrating the festival. 





# Why is India yet to become electronics hub like China?

## India's 'punitive duty and tax', lack of 'robust ecosystem' are challenges

New Delhi, Jan 25: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Vision Document released Monday, aiming at developing the country's electronics manufacturing sector, lays out regulatory and other challenges that stop businesses from reaching their full potential.

The challenges listed in the document include how India has the highest tariffs on the import of components for electronic products, compared to competing electronics hubs like China and Vietnam. Other challenges listed include "regulatory uncertainty", and "punitive duty structures and tax levies". The document is the second volume of a 'Vision Document', laying out a roadmap and strategies to make India's electronics manufacturing sector increase its value to \$300 billion by 2026, from the current \$75 billion.

The document was unveiled by both Union IT minister Ashwini Vaishnav and Minister of State for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar. It has been released by the MeitY, in association with in-



Union IT minister Ashwini Vaishnav

dustry body India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA).

The first volume of the Vision Document was released in November 2021 and discussed how India's share of electronic exports and its role in the global supply chain for electronics can be increased.

'Challenges of infrastructure, tariff, FTAs'

In a section listing the challenges the electronics sector faces in reaching the goal of a \$300 billion industry, the Vision Document says, "While the policy initiatives of the

government have had a positive impact on the manufacturing ecosystem, the disabilities have persisted by and large".

The document says challenges related to infrastructure, tariffs, and Free Trade Agreements must be resolved to make manufacturing in India "resilient, globally competitive and able to undertake operations at a massive scale".

In a table comparing India, Vietnam, and China for factors that lead to cost reduction in electronics manufacturing, the document shows that Vietnam

and China have more favourable subsidy structures than India does in areas like machinery used for manufacturing, and research & development.

The document does concede that these cost factors are based on a 2018 analysis and that since then, cost gaps are "estimated" to have narrowed due to factors like China experiencing power shortages. But the document maintains, "These disabilities impact the competitiveness of manufacturing electronics in India vis-à-vis China and Vietnam".

Lack of component ecosystem, high import costs

Another challenge is India lacking a robust ecosystem of companies locally manufacturing components required for electronic products.

"In the absence of a full-fledged component ecosystem in India, these components are required to be imported that results in increased costs and lead time for the manufacturers.... Moreover, India even lacks in manufacturing of components that are labour intensive and

are feasible to manufacture in India, given the availability of cheap and skilled manpower. Active policy support to promote local manufacturing, including through domestic players, appears to be missing at present," the Vision Document says.

The high cost of importing these components is listed as a challenge.

"When compared to its Asian peers, India imposes the highest tariffs on inputs of electronic products and such tariffs continue to be subject to amendments frequently".

The document points to places where 'ease of doing business' can be increased. "In the policy initiatives and schemes of the government, the cost of land is not factored in...the cumbersome process of land acquisition overall acts as a deterrent for quick set up of a manufacturing unit."

'No income tax holidays' in India for the sector

Another challenge is that China and Vietnam "readily provide" resources like buildings and dormitories to manufacturers, and

even "the regulatory compliances are undertaken by the government authorities". India does not take such initiatives. A lack of Free Trade Agreements with developed countries is another challenge for the sector, the document adds.

"Punitive duty structures and tax levies" is another challenge to the growth of the Indian electronic manufacturing sector.

The document observes that encouraging the growth of the local sector by discouraging imports via higher tariffs may not work, since manufacturers may leave the country. Sony and Xiaomi closed their units in Brazil due to high tax levies, the document notes.

Taxation in India is another challenge. Compared to China and Vietnam, India provides "lower income tax exemptions and reductions to electronics manufacturers". "No income tax holidays are being provided in India unlike those provided in Vietnam. Vietnam also offers very long term predictability of 10-30 years of Income Tax holiday/concessional rates," the document notes.

## Despite conflicts, India's imports from China soar to almost \$100 bn

China's exports to India reached \$97.52 billion in 2021, while total two-way bilateral trade touched \$125.66 billion

Imports to India from China reached nearly \$100 billion for the first time in calendar year 2021, as the import of electrical and electronic goods, particularly smart phones, as well as machinery, fertilisers and specialty chemicals, including active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), witnessed a massive surge.

According to the latest figures published by China's General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), exports to India reached \$97.52 billion in 2021, while total two-way bilateral trade touched \$125.66 billion. According to the GACC, the biggest jump has been witnessed in the shipment of electric and electronic goods, including smart phones and storage units; a wide range of industrial goods, including telecom equipment, auto components, and machine tools; and specialty chemicals, including APIs and fertilisers

such as urea, ammonia sulphate and other varieties.

**India imports more petroleum products from China**

In terms of key import items from China in the first eight months of the calendar year 2021, the import of petroleum (crude) and petroleum products, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, and also that of coal, coke, and briquettes also jumped significantly, according to Foreign Trade Performance Analysis (FTPA) by India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

These items together accounted for about \$60 billion of the total imports from China during this period. Commodity-wise data for December is yet to be released by India.

"India's overall relationship with China seems to mirror the US-China relationship, in which economic and political relations have their own distinct dynamics," Biswajit Dhar, trade economist and professor, Cen-



tre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, JNU told. "Despite its worsening political relations with China, the US has not been able to decrease its reliance on the 'factory of the world'. India, too, has been unable to decouple from the Chinese economy, despite the government of India's efforts. India's China-dependence syndrome could increase further when our manufacturing industries recover fully to the pre-pandemic levels," Dhar said.

A report in the Chinese state-run Global Times also said: "An

increase in China-India trade in 2021, which reached a record high, surpassing \$125 billion, amid bilateral tensions, is just another piece of proof that New Delhi is unable to reduce its dependence on the Chinese market."

Ajai Sahai, director and CEO, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), added that "one of the main reasons why imports from China are touching record levels is because of the huge demand for electronic goods and machinery by the domestic industry as well as APIs".

Meanwhile, according to the provisional data released by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics under the Department of Commerce (Ministry of Commerce and Industry), India's imports from China reached \$87.5 billion, while total bilateral trade stood at \$114.30 billion in 2021.

According to Dhar, the mismatch in the Indian and Chinese data could be due to certain issues related to leakages in reporting and non-reporting of data, due to under-invoicing done by exporters.

**Indian exports to China growing steadily**

India's exports to China in 2021 also reached record levels, according to the FIEO. According to DGCIS data, Indian exports to China jumped to \$24 billion in 2021, compared to \$19 billion in 2020 and \$17.1 billion in 2019. "India's exports to China are also growing steadily. In 2021, we got some

market access in China's agricultural market. We are now exporting more non-basmati rice, exotic vegetables, soybeans and fruits," added Sahai. According to Ranade, this is the reason why the trade deficit has been kept under check. The ballooning of India-China trade deficit has always been a contentious issue between both countries. "The trade deficit was narrowing for three years till 2019, but has been rising again. Having said that, let's not forget that in the coming years, despite the pandemic, US and China will grow by 5 per cent. And China alone is a \$6 trillion consumer market," Ranade said. "More than fifty countries have significant exports to China. If our exporters can tap into that market, it will be a great driver of our growth," he added. India's trade deficit with China in 2021, according to the provisional DGCIS figures, stood at \$61 billion compared to \$39 billion in 2020.



# 'IAS rule amendment not Centre-state issue, it's about country's governance'

**It cannot be a question of individual comfort when the governance of the country suffers, says Apurva Chandra, I&B secretary**

New Delhi, Jan 25: The secretary of information and broadcasting Apurva Chandra on Monday said that proposed amendments to the Indian Administrative Service cadre rules need to be viewed not from the perspective of a Centre-state conflict, but from overarching need for the smooth governance of the country, as states continue to challenge the proposed changes and say that these would destroy the country's federal structure. "This is not just a Centre-state issue; it needs to be viewed from the perspective of the governance of the country," Chandra said. "It cannot be a question of individual comfort when the governance of the country suffers."

Among the amendments proposed is one that says the Centre will arrive at the number of officers on CDR in consultation with states, another that in case of any difference of opinion between the Centre and the state, the latter will go with the decision of the former, and within a specified time and a third that the Centre could pick a specific officer from a state in public interest.

The union government has sought state government responses to the proposed amendments to IAS cadre rules by January 25, after the last reminder

on this was sent on January 6, and at least 10 chief ministers have written to the Prime Minister terming this a blow to the federal structure of governance as they will be forced under the new rules to relieve officers for central deputation.

Chandra added that state-level stints are immensely helpful for officers, as it allows taking the learnings from the ground and implementing them on a larger policy scale. "My Maharashtra stint, as controller of rationing in Bombay, helped me realize that there were many issues concerning the diversion of kerosene and LPG," he said. "When I came to the petroleum ministry, we helped enact laws that could prevent such diversions."

He stressed that implementation experience at the state level can be leveraged by IAS officers at the central level to enact better policies. "What happens is that officers at the secretary and additional secretary-level (in states) agree to come to the Centre," he said. "It is at the lower levels that people don't take deputation. My three stints with the government of India have helped me immensely expand my oeuvre."

According to a government note a trend of decreasing representation of IAS officers up to joint secretary level in GoI has been



Apurva Chandra, secretary of information and broadcasting

noticed as most of the States are not meeting their CDR obligations and the number of officers, sponsored by the States to serve in GoI are much lesser than the CDR. "The number of IAS officers on CDR has gone down from 309 in 2011 to 223 as on date," states the note. "The percentage of CDR utilization has gone down from 25% in 2011 to 18% as on date. This is despite an increase of IAS officers at deputy secretary/Director level in IAS from 621 in 2014 to 1130 in 2021; the number of such officers on central deputation has gone down from 117 to 114 during the period."

The note adds that the reason quoted by most of the state cadres for not sponsoring officers

as per prescribed CDR is a shortage of officers in the cadre. "Considering the same and the fact that shortage of AIS officers in the cadres, if any, has to be shared mutually between the Centre and the States, it has been proposed that the state cadre may now provide such number of offices as part of CDR only after adjusting the same proportionately with the number of officers available in the cadre," states the note.

The union government states that this would address the issue of genuine shortage of officers in any particular cadre. "It may be mentioned that the requirement from the states is only to sponsor adequate number of officers for posting in the Centre.

The actual number of officers to be deputed to the Central Government shall be decided only in consultation with the State Government," the note added.

It further notes that for dealing with specific situations like major disasters, national security, services of an AIS officer may be warranted in the Centre. "Similarly, services of an AIS officer with a specific Domain expertise may be required for any important time bound flagship program/project of GoI. The extant Cadre Rules do not have specific provisions to cater to such situations, which have now been proposed through these amendments," the note said.

## Why states oppose the amendments

A look at the IAS Cadre Rules 1954 very clearly outlines that the Centre in consultation with states will recruit IAS officers on deputation to the Centre. And more so, the Rules have clearly maintained that in case of disagreement between the Centre and states, the Centre's decision will prevail.

However, the 1954 rules have not mentioned any time period to bring into effect the Centre's decision. Simply put, in the original rules, there is no 'Time-Line' for states to implement the Centre's direc-

tion. But in the proposed amendments, it has been clearly specified that states must implement the Centre's order "within a specified time." The implication here is states cannot sit on the Centre's order for years.

Though the 1954 Rules have vested the final authority power to the Centre on IAS deputation matter, the amendments, in a way, redefined the powers making it look like a 'compelling power'. Like any rules, some observers feel the powers may be misused to harass Opposition-ruled states, whereby the Centre can 'compulsorily' take high ranking IAS officers like Chief Secretary on deputation to Centre. The sayings of Sardar Patel on those Civil Servants (IAS/IPS) should not take part in politics holds true. "A civil servant cannot afford to and must not, take part in politics," said the architect of All India Services Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the ironman of India, addressing the first batch of IAS officers on April 21, 1947. Many instances have come from West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and even in Odisha, where senior IAS officers to be in good books with the powers that be in the State, conduct in a manner that was not in conformity with Civil Service Rules.

## Odisha Opposes Centre's Move To Amend IAS Cadre Rule



### Odisha Babus Opposes Centre's Move To Amend IAS Cadre Rule

Raising objection over the proposal to change Rule 6 (1), which deals with Central deputation of IAS officers, the Odisha government's General Administration de-

partment has shot off a letter to the Centre Bhubaneswar, Jan 25: The controversy regarding the proposed amendment to the All India Service (cadre)

Rules 1954 has escalated further with Odisha joining several other states in opposing the Centre's move. Raising objection over the proposal to change Rule 6 (1), which deals with Central deputation of IAS officers, the Odisha government's General Administration department has reportedly shot off a letter to the Centre.

In the letter, the State underlined that the developmental projects and their implementation in the State will get hampered if civil servants are taken on Central deputation. It has urged the Centre to implement the ex-

isting rules and also fill up the vacancies in the administrative services.

Earlier, state governments of Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan had expressed their opposition to the proposal.

Opposing the Central move, Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja said, "If the rules are amended, the Centre will call back able civil servants working in the state level and where there is no BJP government and send corrupt as well as lazy officers to states which will

hamper the developments. All, irrespective of their political affiliations, should oppose the move."

On the other hand, the State unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) threw its weight behind the proposed amendment.

"All the civil servants belong to particular state cadres. If their deputations are withheld due to state government hesitation, it will lead to low strength of civil servants at the Centre which will also affect the development of the country," Prithiviraj Harichandan, BJP's State general secretary said.

"I think the amendment will not have any negative impact. Those going on Central deputation work for the country and those stay back in the state level serve the state as well as the country. In many cases, the state governments act arbitrarily and the amendment will completely eliminate the practice," he added.

Notably, the proposed changes in the rules on the deputation of civil servants say that the Centre shall decide the matter in case of any disagreement. The states have been given time till January 25 to respond.



## SP-RLD turns West UP battle tough for BJP

By Shivaji Sarkar

Muzaffarnagar-Ghaziabad, Jan 29: It is the busiest Saturday in western UP. The galaxy of leaders is on whirlwind tours of the region in a do or dies battle. SP leader Akhilesh Singh Yadav and RLD leader Jayant Chaudhury jointly took "ana Sankalp" vow (holding a fistful of food grains) to end BJP rule, announced nutritious ten-rupee-thali, and 300 units of free electricity to each household. They accused BJP of vitiating the atmosphere and doing politics of hatred for the sake of power.

Gujarat Congress leader Hardik Patel also caused a stir as the police slammed the gates he goes to meet students injured in police lathi-charge on railway job stir at Prayagraj. NSUI president Neeraj Kundan and Youth Congress president BV Srinivasan accompanied him. Patel announced to continue his support for the students and said that the state government's move to still the voice was undemocratic. He was there as an emissary of Congress leader Priyanka Vadra Gandhi.

The BJP is taking the election with utter seriousness amid severe challenges from the Samajwadi Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal combine in Western UP with 136 seats. It had won 112 seats in 2017. Senior BJP leaders have rushed here to meet the voters one-to-one. In Saharanpur, Home Minister Amit Shah stops his door-to-door campaign because of what is stated as a large crowd.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also address a virtual rally through LED screens at party offices to West UP voters on January 31.

No less enthusiastic are the SP leader Yadav and RLD leader Chaudhury. They jointly announced at a press conference in Ghaziabad on Saturday of strong front against BJP and expressed confidence in forming government in the state. On Friday, Yadav had to fly to Muzaffarnagar but permission to the flight was inordinately delayed leading Yadav to shoot charges of it being a deliberate move to sabotage the launch of a joint campaign.

A proposer Ramvir of BJP candidate Lakshmi Chaudhury is shot dead in Mathura. It has added to the tense atmosphere. Senior BJP leaders have rushed to Meerut, Shamli, Baghpat, Muzaffarnagar, Ghaziabad for the door-to-door campaign. Chief Minister Adityanath Yogi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and state party chief Swatantra Dev Singh are not taking the chance. The sliding Jat votes and consolidation of Muslim votes in favor of SP are the concern of the BJP and it is trying to create a wedge between them. Amit Shah met Jat leaders including Kisan Morcha leaders Rakesh Tikait and Naresh Tikait but not too much success.

The Rashtriya Muslim Morcha of RSS national executive member Indresh Kumar is also holding meets with Muslim groups in Moradabad, Amroha, Muzaffarnagar, and other Muslim-dominated areas to woo minority voters.

Western UP has become a tough battlefield as in many areas BJP candidates and leaders are facing a hostile crowd. Even Swatantra Dev Singh was jeered at by Valmiki Basti in Khatauli in Muzaffarnagar. Many others like deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya, Harendra Prasad were chased away in their constituencies. At several places, the candidates or party leaders were forced to leave the Meeting Venue.

Unemployment, rising prices, petrol prices, junking of ten-year-old cars, non-remunerative prices to farmers, high edible oil prices, marathon walk of migrant laborers, body queues at the crematorium are the issues that are rocking the election campaign. These are major opposition peg along with the politics of hatred and overt move to communalize politics by the BJP. The BJP is countering it with the SP being a mafia goonda party, and for they being a minority-dominated Jinna party. The electioneering is hotting up. Would it be able to retain the tally or would the SP-RLD trounce it?

## Nitish Kumar's Party To Run Against BJP In UP; Says 'Everything's Fine'

**Ties between Nitish Kumar's party and the BJP have been tested since last year's Bihar elections where the JDU emerged as the weaker of the two parties**

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Janata Dal-United (JDU) will contest next year's Uttar Pradesh elections separately from its Bihar ally BJP, the party announced on Wednesday, saying the decision had nothing to do with developments in Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's state where "everything is fine".

"Janata Dal-United has decided to fight the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections set to be held in 2022 alone, separate from the BJP. The decision was taken unanimously by the national committee of the Janata Dal-United," the party's general secretary KC Tyagi told media.

"In 2017, we did not contest in UP. This damaged the party quite a bit. Our party's national committee has unanimously decided that UP is a state connected with Bihar



**Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal United has not acknowledged any strain in ties yet**

where our government policies have been well publicised. So, we should contest the assembly elections in UP alone in 2022," Mr Tyagi said, adding he had been made in-charge of the campaign.

"The decision to contest elections alone in UP has nothing to do with the political devel-

opments in Bihar though everything is fine in Bihar," he added.

Ties between Nitish Kumar's party and the BJP have been tested since last year's state elections where the JDU emerged as the weaker of the two parties following a spoiler by the Lok Janshakti

Party that many speculated had covert support from the BJP.

Demoted to junior partner and its biggest rival Rashtriya Janata Dal becoming the single-largest party, Nitish Kumar still became Chief Minister but the BJP showed who's boss by replacing his long-time second-in-command Sushil Modi with two new Deputy Chief Ministers. Less than two months after the October-November elections, the JDU faced another humiliation in Arunachal Pradesh where all but one of its MLAs switched to the BJP.

However, any strain between the two parties has not been publicly acknowledged yet by the JDU or Nitish Kumar even though the Chief Minister has been increasingly prone to angry outbursts at public appearances lately.

## Private sector must invest in labour-oriented industries to create jobs: Piyush Goyal

**Piyush Goyal has urged the private sector to invest in labour-oriented industries**

New Delhi, Jan 22: Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal, on Friday (January 21), urged the private sector to invest in labour-oriented industries. According to the minister, the investments could create jobs in sectors like plastics, footwear, textiles, and leather, among others.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI), Goyal said that he believes that raw jute is being hoarded leading to a crisis in the sector, but will examine if some relaxations could be offered on the stock limit for export or-

ders.

The assurance from the minister came at a time when the Indian Jute Mills Association initiated legal steps against the government for a resolution to the raw jute crisis. The recent crisis has led to financial losses for the millers and supply commitment failure.

The minister also said the government cannot offer support to the jute sector by way of mandatory packaging and continues to pay higher prices due to hoarding. "We will get it examined with the Jute Commissioner and see if stock relaxation can be offered for



**Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal**

exports," he replied to a question on the current restriction by the regulator to stock raw jute by a mill to a maximum of 45 days. Goyal has also sought suggestions from stakeholders for reforms in the jute sector to protect the interest of farmers. "We have long term export commitments for a period between six and 12 months, while a stock limit

of just 45 days results in financial risk," Fort Gloster MD Hemant Bangur said. On the other hand, MCCI members lauded Goyal for inviting State Bank of India's officials during the interaction to solve the problem of tea gardens in Assam. The organisation pointed out that there are only 100 ATMs for around 800 gardens.



## Padmasri Shanti Devi passes away: Floral tribute and guard of honour on the bank of Bansadhara



Rayagada, Jan 18 : (Jogeswar Das) At about the wee hours of last Monday, Padmasri Shanti Devi felt chest pain and shifted to the hospital at Gunupur, where she was declared brought dead. Being in a wheelchair, she recently received Padmasri from President, who came down from the dais to felicitate her. She was 88 years.

Accompanied by her husband Late Dr. Ratan Das, she started her work with the tribal communities of Sankhulipadar village near Therubali and other peripheral villages of Rayagada during the year 1953. She was personally treating the yaws, a tropical skin disease that causes large red swellings and leprosy patients. Yaws was eradicated from that region after she continuously worked for 3-4 years. Leprosy also did not spread. Along with this work, she taught the children of the village. She even cultivated cotton in her backyard and produced yarn, then clothes out of the yarn. Used those clothes for themselves. Over a while, she started nurturing destitute tribal girls by establishing a service institution named Seva Samaj. Many girls of undivided Koraput districts have got the opportunity to be educated. She became one of the

prominent woman leaders having an alliance with Vinoba Bhave's Bhudan movement in Odisha. Distributing land received through Bhoodan, depositing the distribution document in the tehsil office & getting those land documents approved by Tehsildar, etc were their focus of work.

Her message "Naxals and Govt should shed their violence and counter-violence activities and come together for a dialogue to jointly decide the approaches for peace. There is no way other than this" during four times Shanti Yatra (Peace march) from Malkangiri to Mayurbhanj & even to Maoist areas of Chhatisgarh & Andhra Pradesh still reminisced by her followers in the march. She always stressed a self-introspection process. If one is serious, one must adopt a single and simple principle of Gandhi in one's own life. A person who changes his value base can only attract youths to follow a path endowed with morale and principles. One has to go beyond party politics, age, religion and engage with and strengthen the civil society peace-building initiatives, said Santi Devi. She lived a Gandhian life in true spirit.

Her last rite was solemnized on the bank of Bansadhara River where floral tributes were given by Minister Sri Jagannath Saraka, Collector Sri Saroj Mishra, SP Sri Vivekananda Sharma, Rayagada MLA Sri Makaranda Muduli, Gunupur MLA Sri Raghunath Gomango, Odisha Sarvodaya Samaj Secretary Sri Badal Tah, Odisha Adibasi Manch State Convenor Smt Bidulata Huika, OUWJ President Sri Jogeswar Das, Secretary Sri Dipak Prusty, Octogenarian Gandhian & Sarvodaya Samaj President Sri Jayaram Jena, FARR coordinator Sri Bijaya Baboo, NAWO State Convenor Smt Pramila Swain, Seva samaj Secretary Sushri Rajeswari Dalai and several other dignitaries. Guard of honor was given by state police during which the tri-color flag was covered on her body. Her only son Sri Sidharth Das conducted the last rites following the Covid guidelines.

## Bengal bureaucrats skip PM Modi's meeting amid friction over new IAS cadre rules

The development comes at a time West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to PM Modi two times this month to oppose proposed changes by the central government to the IAS cadre rules

Kolkata, Jan 23: District magistrates of West Bengal were conspicuous in their absence at a Saturday meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where he called on DMs of states to facilitate the implementation of government schemes in a time-bound manner.

The development comes at a time West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to PM Modi two times this month to oppose proposed changes by the central government to the IAS cadre rules.

The Opposition BJP in Bengal alleged that the absence of all 22 DMs from the state was because it was an instruction by the "political bosses" in Bengal.

"Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodiji interacted virtually with District Magistrates (DMs) of many states today, with the objective of taking direct feedback about the progress & status of implementation of various Central Govt schemes and programmes... Unfortunately, DMs of West Bengal were missing, as instructed by their political bosses. Such instance of non-cooperation is a disgrace in the arena of Cooperative Federalism and might act as major impediment to the development of WB," said Leader of Opposition in Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari.

The Trinamool Congress, how-



ever, said a meeting of DMs called without representation from the state governments was "unfair".

When asked about Bengal DMs skipping the meet, TMC MP Saugat Roy said: "The meeting called without the chief minister and chief secretary; excluding the state government is totally unfair... Ignoring everyone, why did the Prime Minister suddenly go to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav like this? I do not support such an incident in any way. If the district magistrates were absent, I think that was correct decision."

Leader of Opposition in state Assembly Suvendu Adhikari on Sunday said that he would write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, urging them to take disciplinary action against district magistrates in West Bengal who did not attend the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Satur-

day.

In Saturday's meeting, held via video-conference, PM Modi urged the DMs to take government schemes to every doorstep, including the Centre's Ayushman Bharat card and Ujjwala gas connections. He also called on the DMs to prepare a two year-vision for their districts and said five tasks associated with 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' - to celebrate 75 years of Independence - be taken up. This latest thaw between the Centre and the West Bengal government is the proposed amendments to the IAS (Cadre) Rules, 1954. The proposed changes will allow the Centre to post IAS officers on central deputation and bypass reservations of state governments. CM Banerjee earlier this month expressed "strong reservations" against any changes to the rules and said the proposal was "against the spirit of cooperative federalism".

## Unfortunate that Bengal govt didn't invite LoP Suvendu Adhikari for R-Day program, says BJP

The BJP has criticised the West Bengal government for not inviting Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari for the state's Republic Day program at Red Road in Kolkata.

Kolkata, Jan 26: The BJP has criticised the West Bengal government for not inviting Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari for the state's Republic Day program at Red Road in Kolkata.

On this, Suvendu Adhikari said, "It has happened for the first time post Independence in Bengal. Last year, Abdul Mannan was invited even amid the pandemic. Mamata Banerjee cannot digest her defeat in Nandigram, which is why, I believe, it was her direction to not invite me for the Republic Day program."

In the state Assembly election in 2021, the TMC defeated the



BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari

BJP but Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lost in Nandigram to BJP's Suvendu Adhikari. On Wednesday, West Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar added, "It is unfortunate [that Adhikari was not invited]. The Constitutional rights given to the Opposition have been denied by the party in power here in Bengal. Opposition parties were insulted during the rule of the Left and

now again." BJP's IT department in-charge Amit Malviya tweeted, "In another low, Mamata Banerjee didn't invite Shri Suvendu Adhikari, LoP in WB, for the Republic Day celebration held at Red Road in Kolkata. This is the first time LoP hasn't been invited. The drubbing in Nandigram surely hurts, but as CM she must uphold democratic traditions."



# Manipur becomes hotbed of women's football



India captain Ashalata Devi is one of the eight players from Manipur in the Asian Cup squad.

Chaoba Devi was visiting her maternal grandparents in Angtha, roughly 25km from Imphal when she saw a puny girl playing with full energy with a bunch of other kids on a barren, uneven surface. There was something about her that immediately caught Chaoba's attention. "Her discipline... and skill, of course," she says.

Impulsively, Chaoba asked the girl, in her early teens, if she'd move to Imphal and join her community club, Kangchup Road Young Physical and Sports Association (KRYPSA FC). Almost as

impulsively, the girl agreed and before they knew it, they were on a bus to Manipur's capital.

This was in 2008. In the decade that followed, that teenager, Loitongbam Ashalata Devi, went on to become one of the most influential players in India. In 2019, she was named as one of the three nominees for Asia's Player of the Year by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). And she was the captain in India's Asian Cup match against Iran in what was the team's first appearance in the tournament after 19 years.

It was one of those 'by chance encounters that coaches and scouts hope for. For Chaoba, this was one of the rare occasions in her decades of coaching. The rest of the time, the former India captain and assistant coach traveled from village to village across Manipur, spending hours on dusty fields in the hope of spotting a player who could become a star. In a state overflowing with talent, that shouldn't be a tough task, one assumes.

Ashalata is one of the eight players from the north-eastern hotbed in India's Asian Cup squad, accounting for almost one-third of the side. Chaoba says five of those players - Sweetie Devi Ngangbam, Maibam Linthoingambi Devi, Nongmeithem Ratanbala Devi, Grace Dangmei, and Ashalata - have been trained by her at some point in their formative years. It could have been nine had striker Bala Devi, arguably the best of the lot, not been ruled out by injury.

That Manipuri players dominate the squad is hardly surprising, given the deep-rooted football culture at a community level there. But a cursory glance at the team sheet gives some insight into the poten-

tial to grow the women's game. More than half of the squad, 13 out of the 23 players, come from Manipur and Tamil Nadu. Five are from the Delhi-Haryana belt, two from Odisha, and there's one each from Punjab, West Bengal, and Jharkhand.

Former India international Maymol Rocky, who has been associated with the junior and

The Madurai-based club opened its doors to women only in 2016 but in a short period, it's been a runaway success at the national level, doing well in the women's league and, simultaneously, unearthing players.

But while Sethu has been around for only five years, it's the patience and relentless hard work by the coaches, and

I learned, I used to teach the younger players in our local club."

At the turn of the century, soon after her playing career, Chaoba earned her coaching licence and immediately began traversing Manipur's hilly terrain in search of players.

Suffice to say, her visits didn't go to waste. This one time,

## State accounts for eight of the 23 players that make the Indian squad of Asia Cup

senior national teams in different roles over the last decade, says the scouting network is always on the lookout for players. "I can safely say that from the talent we've seen across the country in the last decade, 99 percent of the best players are in the team," Rocky, who was India's chief coach from 2017 to 2021, says. "The scouts keep an eye on all the matches at the national championships. And to be sure that no player is missed, we also do a statewide exercise."

Work at grassroots

The high number of players from Tamil Nadu, Rocky adds, is largely due to the work done by the state's first all-girls football side, Sethu.

a functional structure that supports them, that's made Manipur a conveyor belt for women footballers for decades.

For Chaoba, the first Indian woman to acquire an AFC 'A' licence, the transition to coaching happened very early in her career. "When I started playing in 1985, there was no coach to guide me," she says. Like most women footballers, Chaoba, too, played with a boys' team early on. "The senior players in the team taught me how to dribble, how to juggle, how to run, and how to kick. I wasn't taught anything formally. I didn't want the generations of women players after me to face the same problem. So, whatever

Chaoba was at a School Games Federation of India championship where she came across an 'extremely skillful forward'. That player, Ratanbala, is now one of India's mainstays and plays as a holding midfielder.

At times, players' families reach out to her, as it happened in the case of Dangmei, whose father - a pastor in a local church in Bishnupur village, travelled roughly 30km to Imphal, saw how Chaoba trained kids at her academy, and then requested her to enroll his football-mad child. And then sometimes, one just stumbles upon players who'd go on to become one of the finest of their generation. Like Ashalata.

# Corruption perception index: India cleanest in South Asia, but democratic status flagged

India's rank improved from one place to 85 among 180 countries in a corruption perception index (CPI) of 2021, according to a new report by Transparency International which, however, raised concern over the country's democratic status.

The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople, uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. Among those with weak scores are some of the world's most populous countries such as China (45) and India (40), and other large economies such as Indonesia (38), Pakistan (28), and Bangladesh (26), the report by

the anti-corruption watchdog said.

India's rank improved by one place to 85 in 2021 from 86th in 2020, according to the index. Except for Bhutan, all of India's neighbors are ranked below it. Pakistan dropped 16 spots in the index and was ranked at 140.

Calling the case of India particularly worrying, the report released on Tuesday said while the country's score has remained stagnant over the past decade, some of the mechanisms that could help reign in corruption are weakening.

"There are concerns over the country's democratic status, as fundamental freedoms and institutional checks and balances decay." Journalists and activists

**India's rank improved one place to 85 among 180 countries in a corruption perception index (CPI) of 2021, according to a new report which, however, raised concern over the country's democratic status.**

are particularly at risk and have been victims of attacks by the police, political militants, criminal gangs, and corrupt local officials," the report based on the index said.

The report further alleged that civil society organisations that speak up against the government have been targeted with security, defamation, sedition, hate speech, and contempt-of-court charges, and with regulations on foreign funding.

"A concerning trend across some of these nations (with weak scores) is a weakening of anti-corruption institutions or, in some cases, absence of an agency to coordinate action against corruption," it said.

Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, and Norway topped the list with the highest score.

While corruption takes vastly different forms from country to country, this year's scores reveal that all regions of the globe are



The index ranks 180 countries; India ranked 85th

at a standstill when it comes to fighting public sector corruption. At the top of the CPI, countries in Western Europe and the European Union continue to wrestle with transparency and accountability in their response to Covid-19, threatening the region's clean image.

In parts of Asia Pacific, the Americas, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, increasing restrictions on accountability measures and basic civil freedoms allow corruption to go unchecked. Even historically high-performing countries are showing signs of decline, the report said.



# ‘Maut mubarak ho Meena, this world is not for people like you’: Nargis wrote

Late legendary actor Meena Kumari is often described as a 'historically incomparable' actor due to her glowing career that spanned 33 years. However, it's her personal life that was the talk of the town in that era. She is considered a tragedy icon in Indian cinema, owing to her unhappy marriage with screenwriter Kamal Arohi and failed romance with Dharmendra. She died in 1972 and it was Nargis Dutt who had come to pay her respects to her during the final rites and said, "Meena, maut mubarak ho!" Nargis penned a

friends. When I went for dinner with Dutt saab, Meena voluntarily took care of Sanjay and Namrata, changing their clothes to making their milk," she added. Nargis revealed that one night during a trip to Madras for a film shoot, she had seen Meena panting heavily in the garden of the hotel and when she inquired, Meena said that she was fine, it could just be tobacco. Nargis didn't believe this entirely and her suspicion was confirmed when she heard suggestive

Just three weeks after Pakeezah's release, Meena

Kumari was critically ill. She slid into a coma and died on March 31, 1972. Liver cirrhosis was determined to be the cause of her death. Nargis wrote, "I caught hold of Kamal Amrohi's secretary Baqar and spoke to him in direct terms, 'Why do you people want to kill Meena?'

She has worked enough for your sake, for how long is she going to feed you?" He said, when the right time comes, we will rest her."

They returned to Bombay, and Nargis said that they didn't meet for a long time. Later, she learnt that Meena Kumar had walked out of Kamal's home and had started living in Mehmood's house. Meena had a showdown with Baqar on the sets of Pinjre Ke Panchhi, and matters got 'so turbulent' that he did not step into Kamal's house again. By this time, stories of Meena Kumar's alcoholism began to surface. This consumption of alcohol was proving to be detrimental to her health, and she went down with jaundice. When Nargis visited her at hospital, she asked, "Manju, you are free, but what use is such freedom if you are bent on killing yourself?" She replied, "Baaji, my patience has a



Meena Kumari and Dharmendra: flute failed to sing

municated to Kamal Saheb, I thought he would come running and fire Baqar. Instead he said, 'Come home, I will decide things there. What was there for him to decide? Now it's me who has decided to not go back to him.' After this, Dharmendra entered Meena Kumari's life, and that gave her some form of happiness, for a while. Nargis wrote, "If Meena has ever loved any-

one passionately, the person is Dharmendra. If Meena ever turned crazy in love for someone, it was Dharmendra." Nargis mentioned that this was 'the most beautiful' phase of her life. However, owing to a misunderstanding, he walked out of her life and she was left heartbroken, Nargis wrote. "Slowly, she began to inch towards death," Nargis wrote.



Meena Kumari

letter to her after her death, which was published in an Urdu magazine. The two had shared a close sisterhood.

She began her column with the message, "'Congratulations on your death' I have never said this earlier. Meena, today your baaji (elder sister) congratulates you on your death and asks you to never step into this world again. This place is not meant for people like you." In her column, she recalled how her friendship with Meena Kumar began. "During the shooting of Main Chup Rahungi, my husband (Sunil Dutt) invited me on sets with the kids. There Meena and I became great



Tragedy Queen with director Kamal Amrohi on the set of film Pakeezah.

limit. How dare Kamal saheb's secretary raise his hand on me? When I got the incident com-

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