

## Naveen Patnaik attends Odisha assembly session after two years

**Senior Congress MLA Tara Bahinipati slammed Patnaik saying the CM could tour districts to launch the state-sponsored Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana smart health card, inaugurate a state-run restaurant in Bhubaneswar, but could not show up in the House.**



Sirish C Mohanty

been attending assembly sessions ever since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in early 2020, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday attended the Budget Session of the state assembly for the first time in nearly two years. Patnaik, who had been attending the House virtually for the last 2 years, went to the assembly and presided over a meeting of the BJD legislature party in the



assembly premises and advised the treasury bench members on how to face the

challenges thrown by the opposition parties. Patnaik was present inside the

assembly when Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal addressed the Budget Session lauding the state government's steps in improving transportation and road connectivity in the state. "I would like to reiterate in unequivocal terms that my government is firmly committed to developing all regions of the state and empowering all sections of the people and is all set to move into a transparent,

technology-driven, transformed new Odisha," Lal said.

The BJP and Congress have been quite critical of Patnaik giving the assembly a miss accusing him of being in deep slumber. In December last year, during the winter session of the assembly, deputy leader of the BJP legislature party Bishnu Charan Sethi said while Patnaik could (Page-5)

## Urban polls pass off smoothly, Jajpur records highest 79 per cent turnout



Women line up to cast vote at a polling booth in Jeypore

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The urban local body (ULB) elections, conducted in the State after a gap of nine years, passed off peacefully in most districts except stray incidents of violence. Jajpur municipality recorded highest 79 pc polling. In Nabarangpur district, election was withheld and repolling announced due to technical glitches in EVM in Umerkote. Reportedly, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) recorded 50% polling while Cuttack Municipal

their franchise in 4,360 booths.

As per reports, in Umerkote municipality, polling at booth 14 in Ward 8 was withheld due to fault in the EVM machine which apparently reflected names of chairperson candidates of Nabarangpur municipality. The error was detected after 372 voters had

**Administration sources said the three municipalities recorded average polling at about 62.66 pc, a drop of about 16.34 pc against rural polls.**

Corporation (CMC) recorded 65% polling. Similarly, Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) recorded 47% polling. SEC Padhi added that the election was held for 47 Municipalities, 59 NACs, and 3 Municipal Corporations across the State. A total of 40.55 lakh voters exercised

already cast their votes. Election officer Ram Chandra Majhi said there will be repolling in ward 8 on Friday and all 1,296 voters will cast votes. However, election in Nabarangpur district otherwise was incident-free. Koraput district witnessed around 60 per cent (pc) voter turnout in (Page-5)

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OIPR- 15001/13/0129/2122



# Odisha cop shoots himself with service revolver in Ganjam, dies

Ganjam SP Brijesh Rai said the inspector was suffering from depression for the past few weeks and could have shot himself for that reason.

Bhubaneswar, March 25: A 40-year-old inspector of a police station in Ganjam district of Odisha died after he shot himself with his service revolver on Friday afternoon.

Police officials in Ganjam said the inspector-in-charge of Gangapur police station of the district, died after he fired two rounds at his stomach while he was in his official residence on Friday



afternoon. He used to live with his mother in the police quarters. Ganjam SP Brijesh Rai said the inspector was suffering from depression for

the past few weeks and could have shot himself for that reason.

"He seemed mentally disturbed over something. This afternoon he left for his residence for lunch. But moments later, the staff at the police station heard two gunshots. The police official was found lying in a pool of blood. He had joined the Gangapur police station four months ago. He was taken to

the Aska community health centre soon after the incident, where he was declared dead by the doctors," said Rai.

The SP said the circumstances under which the cop died is being probed. The police officer was very sincere and efficient.

The officer's wife also works as a police inspector in Nabarangpur district. He has two sons who live with his wife.

## BJD Secures All Mayoral Posts, 76 Councils in Odisha Municipal Polls

Bhubaneswar, March 26: In addition, the ruling camp has secured the positions of mayor and chairperson in all 76 bodies. With the municipal laws recently amended,



**Continuing its winning streak, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) swept municipal elections on Saturday, capturing 76 of 108 urban local bodies. The party won 766 of the 852 Zilla Parishad seats in 30 districts in last month's panchayat elections.**

this is the first time that people in Odisha can directly elect mayors of corporations, chairpersons of municipalities and NACs, in addition to ward councillors.

Of the 105 municipalities and notified area councils (NACs) in the state, the BJD emerged victorious in 73, while the BJP managed to secure just 16, followed by the Congress at seven. Nine urban local bodies were secured by Independents.

The Naveen Patnaik-led party also registered its win in the three municipal corporations of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur. Thanking the people for re-imposing faith in his party, BJD President Naveen Patnaik, in a tweet, said: "Thank all the people of #Odisha for the overwhelming support in #OdishaMunicipalElection. The win is a reflection of the outpouring of love for @bjd\_odisha and the untiring effort of thousands of party workers. #OdishaLovesBJD"

He also congratulated all winning BJD candidates and appreciated the hard work of party workers.

BJD's candidate Sulochana Das, who was elected to the post of mayor in Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, expressed her gratitude to people in the state capital for her victory. "I am touched by the love people have showered on me despite being a newbie in politics, the journalist-turned-BMC mayor said.

Similarly, senior BJP leader and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has congratulated all winning BJP candidates and thanked the people who have voted for the BJP in the urban election.

## Kapil Sharma & Nandita Das Meet CM Naveen Patnaik



Bhubaneswar, March 18: Popular comic and actor Kapil Sharma on Thursday met Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on the latter's residence right here, together with actress and director Nandita Das.

Following the interplay, the Chief Minister gifted

every of them a silver filigree Konark wheel, a memento and a jersey of the Indian hockey crew.

"It was a pleasure meeting actor-comedian @KapilSharmaK9 & filmmaker @nanditadas who have taken time out from shooting of their upcoming film in Bhubaneswar.

Encouraged them to explore #Odisha's treasure-trove of natural beauty and heritage," Patnaik mentioned in a tweet.

Sharing some footage of the assembly on his Twitter deal with, Sharma mentioned, "It was a pleasure meeting the honourable CM of Odisha Shri @Naveen\_Odisha... thank you for the wonderful hospitality n making us feel at home... your heart is as beautiful like your state, Odisha will stay in my heart forever with gratitude."

Earlier on Thursday morning, Sharma shared a video, the place he was seen driving a motorbike in Bhubaneswar.

Kapil Sharma is in Odisha to shoot for an upcoming movie directed by Nandita Das. He has been sharing movies and footage on social media platforms since he started capturing for the movie, which is but to be titled.

Sharma, who's enjoying the function of a meals supply boy within the film, has been seen capturing in several places of the town for the previous few days.

Shahana Goswami performs the feminine lead within the upcoming film, during which she will probably be seen as Kapil Sharma's spouse.

## Two Members Of Bihar's Notorious 'Nut Gang' Held In Bhubaneswar For Cash Snatching

Bhubaneswar, March 21: The Commissionerate Police on Monday arrested two members of the notorious 'Nut Gang' of Bihar who were involved in a series of cash snatching incidents near various banks in Bhubaneswar recently. The accused have been identified as Badal Gowala (34) and Aniket Das (22). Police said the accused

**The accused have been identified as Badal Gowala (34) and Aniket Das (22). Police said the accused were presently cooling off in West Bengal after committing several crimes in the Odisha capital city.**

were presently cooling off in West Bengal after committing several crimes in the Odisha capital city.

Bhubaneswar DCP, Umashankar Dash said that

the criminals were involved in at least 4 cash snatching incidents between March 5 and March 10. They had looted a total of around Rs 12 lakh



cash in all the cases which were reported from Saheed Nagar, Kharavela Nagar and Chandrasekharpur police station limits.

It is suspected that

members of the same Bihar-based criminal gang were involved in a Rs 7 lakh cash loot case in Rourkela recently.

"We stepped up patrolling near banks after the bag (cash) snatching incidents witnessed a rise. One of our teams gave some criminals a chase on March 10, but they managed to escape," said Dash.

Dash further said that the

two accused are part of the notorious Nut Gang of Bihar and they use stolen motorcycles to commit crimes. They mostly targeted people on their return from banks after withdrawing cash. "We appeal hotel owners to share details and photographs of their visitors. This will help the police to strengthen security measures," Dash added.

# Prices vs. Petrol

Subsidise petrol, check prices, kick-start economy, get more revenue



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

The country needs a new approach on prices, taxes tolls and issues of progress. It wants to control prices as often the leaders proclaim and then go on increasing every bit that is under the administrative control.

India must rethink introducing fuel subsidies to boost manufacturing and other activities that could bring more revenue to the nation's kitty. Cut in prices to generate more manufactured goods sales and revenues.

Post-poll the prices are rising almost 85 to 90 paise a day on the plea of rising crude prices. But the companies did not reduce prices when crude prices crashed to a virtual zero during the pandemic. The high fuel prices have stoked inflation as transport prices spiral making goods and

commodities expensive when the people need relief.

The administration says that the petroleum companies decide the prices but despite supposed 'genuine' needs they freeze prices for over a month during elections. It may be a coincidence but that is repeated poll to poll.

Rightly, the Ukrainian situation has put the country in difficult situation but wisely it could firm up an agreement with Russia for continued fuel supply. That is prudent though was not easy in an era of US-led sanctions. The balancing act is possible because of India's moral authority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the corps of diplomats.

The world can see that

Sri Lanka has failed in doing it and again Indian Oil has to come to its rescue by continuing fuel supplies and keep running its power plants. Sri Lanka is in deep economic crisis. Rice is being sold there for Rs 500 a kg and all commodity prices are soaring. Inflation spikes to 14 percent. India has over 13 percent wholesale and 6 percent retail inflation. Income level in India is either thawed or post-covid at a low level. Lanka got into the crisis as it deliberately chose to go into Chinese ambit to keep off India. Its main foreign exchange reserves shrunk due to reckless borrowings from China to finance infrastructure projects, according to Hong Kong Post.

Successive governments in India have been using petroleum as a tax-spinner forgetting that even a paise hike on petrol has cascading effect on the entire economy. Since the UPA times the economy is dependent on taxes on fuel leading to its collapse to 'mahngai dain'. The successive administration should have learnt and corrected it. The problem accelerated as domestic production plummeted to around 20 percent and dependence on imports increased causing the rupee to slide beyond Rs 76.

It has led to overall price spiral. Wholesale and retail prices are going beyond the toleration level. Sunflower oil jumps by 20 percent to Rs 182, soya oil sells at Rs 162, dearer

by 10 percent; and palm oil Rs 151.80 dearer by 13.65 percent. Mustard oil, wheat, rice, pulses rise by over two percent. Textiles and other commodities are also becoming dearer.

Alternate fuel like ethanol, processed largely from sugarcane, is being proposed for mixing with petrol. It is likely to make sugar expensive. It is a myth that it would sell cheap. Processing cost is high. Ethanol production can, according to US studies, cause air, water pollution, soil erosion and habitat loss. It is being seen to benefit Maharashtra cane growers. Apart ethanol is not supposed to be engine friendly with its high moisture.

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2021 on which battery recharging is to be based would make coal and power dearer. Apart more use of batteries will lead to higher coal generated power production causing heavy emission pollution and spike power rates. Power workers are planning two-day strike shortly against the bill as it encourages privatisation.

In the months leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic, U.S. oil production hit an all-time high of just below 13 million barrels per day (BPD). As the pandemic unfolded, demand collapsed, and production followed. By May 2020, oil production had dropped by more

than 3 million BPD to 9.7 million BPD.

India's domestic crude oil production has steadily decreased in recent years. In 2013-14, Indian companies produced 37.8 million tonnes of crude oil and condensate. That dropped to 32.2 million tonnes in 2019-20, a sharp slide of 15 percent. India produced 35.68 MTs of crude petroleum in 2017-18.

During the last over 15 years it was noticed that as petrol prices rise, the economy gets into a spin. Under World Bank and IMF pressure India gave up subsidies causing immense harm to the poor, middle and small enterprises, prices of commodities. A little subsidy not direct benefit helps every section of the society. Small hair cut is always preferable than its total loss. It is a myth that India has a rich class of people and the middle class is able to fend for themselves.

There is nothing like a middle class except that they are slightly above the poverty level. A bumpy situation hits them hard. Overall subsidies benefit a larger population and help the economy keep prices under check. The nation unfortunately continued with the policies of Manmohan Singh instead of correcting it.

India needs to understand the Lankan stress on infra that drained its resources.

India must go slow on infra now. Infrastructure builds expensive assets with a higher recurring expenditure that stresses the economy severely. Had it conserved its reserves, put off expensive infrastructure projects, Lanka could have avoided getting into the amiss. Increased money supply, infra investments and depreciation of the rupee stoked inflation there.

The Ukrainian situation has disturbed the oil supplies across the world. India has hedged it for now with the promise of Russian supplies. World leaders could have influenced Russian leader Vladimir Putin to put seize of Ukraine and not go into a full-fledged war. Today, it has put Europe into a tinder box. For the folly of the NATO and European countries, poor countries like India suffer the most.

The symptoms of Lankan and Indian economy are not different except that India has the capacity and size to sustain which Lanka does not have.

It would be prudent on the part of India to reintroduce subsidies on petrol as alternate energy is yet not available. It would change dynamics of economy, generate more revenue and can do better if infra is put in the backburner and manufacturing is boosted to give the economy a kick-start.



## RSP-State Govt join hands to enhance Fishermen's income



Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has joined hands with State Government to develop pisciculture for ensuring food security and livelihood of the fisherfolk living in the adjoining areas of Mandira Reservoir, a captive water body of RSP. As a part of capacity building, technological intervention, awareness building, and education of fisherfolk and other stakeholders programs were organized at Laing and Dumerjore, the Model Steel Villages cum Resettlement Colonies of RSP situated in Rajganpur and Kuarmunda Blocks for two days on 16th and 17th March.

Around 250 fishing nets were distributed among the fishing

community of the two villages. This program has incurred a cost of Rs. 11.21 Lakh over the distribution of fishing net and training.

To improve the lives of the fishermen, the project was launched last year on 18th November. More than 2 lakhs of fingerlings belonging to the three different species of Rohu, Bhakura, and Mackerel were released in the backwaters of Mandira Dam in the later part of 2021 in the presence of representatives from CSR, Fisheries Department of Government of Odisha, and Fisherman Co-operative Society of the village. The project aims to tap the untapped potential of aquaculture to ensure

livelihood and contribute towards food and nutritional security.

The members of the Fisherman Co-operative Society of the villages were trained on scientific fish farming, fishing methods, and safety precautions. Inputs were provided on various Government schemes for tapping resources required by the group. Ms. Sashmita Kisan (JFTA - Rajganpur), Ms. Shradhanjali Sahoo, JFTA (Kuarmunda) facilitated the groups along with CSR Officials in their respective areas. Sundargarh Collector Nikhil Pavan Kalyan and PK Satapathy, ED (P&A), RSP attended the net distribution function held at Laing. Mr. Kalyan praised the initiatives of RSP and emphasized more such fishing schemes to combat malnutrition and improve the quality of life in the region. Mr. Satapathy in his address assured that RSP will step up its efforts to extend further help to the fishermen of the region to enhance their earnings.

## Rourkela among Top 11 Winners of Eat Smart Cities

Rourkela Smart City has been adjudged the winner among the Top 11 cities to implement Eat Right initiatives and be involved for deep engagement for the next 12 months to scale up their plan. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs announced the name of winners in presence of Manoj Joshi, Secretary (HUA).

Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched the Eat Smart Cities Challenge to enhance the health & wellbeing of the citizens and integrate sustainable food safety & nutrition systems in collaboration with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on 15th April 2021.

All cities under the Smart Cities Mission, capitals of States/UTs, and cities with a population of more than 5,00,000 were invited to participate in the challenge. 108 cities registered themselves in the challenge. In its second phase of evaluation, 20 cities were shortlisted and asked to present the work undertaken by them. Rourkela Smart City has been adjudged among the Top 11 cities as winners by a jury comprising of members from Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), MUFPP, Food Foundation, and NeTPRoFaN (Network of Professionals of Food and Nutrition).

The Challenge aimed to motivate cities to develop a plan that would support a healthy, safe, and sustainable food environment strengthened by institutional, physical, social, and economic infrastructure along with the application of 'smart' solutions to combat issues related to food.

Rourkela has worked extensively in various thematic areas related to food including; reshaping market for distress sellers/farmers, Food for all, stakeholder/community participation in program planning, Wash program related to Food interventions, Redeveloping city food infrastructure, Food & Nutrition for Early Childhood Development, Purnanjali



Program, etc.

Additionally, Rourkela performed various activities such as campaigns on Trans-Fat Free India, Licensing/Registration, campaigns on Reducing Daily Intake of Fat, Salt and Sugar, Campaigns on Food Fortification and the F+ logo, Various Food Adulteration Checking Camps, Drives to Collect and Recycle plastic waste (200 tons), Eat Right Campus Certifications, Hygiene Rating of Meat Shops, Sweet Shops/Bakeries, Restaurants/Hotels/Food Service Establishments, Places of Worship under BHOG Special surveillance drives, etc to win the approval of jury.

## Sundargarh Bahi Padha' Programme Resumes

In this digital era, one thing which suffered most is the habit of book reading. The young generation is showing lesser interest in book reading. To rekindle, encourage the young people of Sundargarh district to inculcate book reading habits district administration had taken initiatives a couple of years ago. Under the initiative, along with book reading, various creative activities were organized at the residential office of the Collector Sundargarh to engage children of various age groups. The event which was being held every Sunday in pre-pandemic is resumed now.

But initiatives had to be suspended during pandemic

Corona. Now with the decline in Corona's impact Sundargarh district administration has again taken steps to resume it.

Taking a step ahead in this direction, the district administration has resumed the 'Sundargarh Bahi Padha' Abhijan in the post-pandemic time. On 22nd March, a special program was held at Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) Library as a part of the Sundargarh Bahi Padha campaign. Students and teachers from various schools of the city participated in the same.

Collector Sundargarh Shri Nikhil Pavan Kalyan and ADM cum Commissioner RMC Dr. Subhankar



Mohapatra joined the event and encouraged the students to read books. The Collector sought the feedback of the participants on how to take the Bahi Padha abhijan forward making it more beneficial for the people of Sundargarh.

Former Reader of Odia Department, Municipal College Rourkela, Girija Goswami, Raj Kumar Mohanty, Teacher at

Municipal High School Panposh, and Bibhuti Bhushan Das, a writer of repute, attended the event and inspired the students to broaden their perspective and improve knowledge by reading books.

The participant students and teachers picked up various books of their choice and enjoyed reading them in the reading rooms of RMC Library.

Similarly, under the campaign, various activities were organized at the District Library, Zilla Sanskruti Bhawan in Sundargarh. Various Folk performances were showcased by local artists to generate interest in book reading.

Under 'Sundargarh Bahi Padha', public libraries have been set up in different parts of the district to ignite the interest in book reading. Apart from the District Library at Sundargarh, another library has been set up at Information and Public Relations Dept. The library has various books to cater to different age groups.

Recently, a sub-divisional library has been opened in

Bonai while Rural Libraries have been set up at block headquarter of Lephrupara and at Kamlaga in Hemgir block. The rural libraries aimed to attract rural students, educated youth, and the local public.

The district administration has renewed steps to encourage reading at various colleges and public places.

Modern libraries, e-Library and ICT Labs are being established at the Govt High Schools as part of High School Transformation Programme under 5T. The modern library and e-library are being especially helpful in enhancing the knowledge of High School students.



# Manoj Bhoi elected Jspur ZP president, Sujata VC president

JAGATSINGHPUR, March 28: The Zilla Parishad [ZP] president election for Jagatsinghpur district was completed, Manoj Kumar Bhoi occupied the post unopposed. Bhoi was elected as a ZP member from zone 3 under Jagatsinghpur block in just concluded ZP polls and he was a front runner for the ZP top post among three aspirants were in the race to capture the post.

Bhoi was a former chairperson of the Jagatsinghpur block and president of the Jagatsinghpur block BJD unit. He was recognized as a close associate of late MLA Bishnu Das and a prominent Dalit leader of Jagatsinghpur



district, he had been continuing his allegiance to BJD and party head chief minister Naveen Patnaik

during the two decades of the political carrier.

Bhoi filed his nomination before the collector

accompanied by Minister Raghunandan Das, MLA Prashant Muduli, and BJD's few top leaders on Sunday. As

no one filed a nomination contesting the polls, later collector cum election officer announced Bhoi elected as ZP president uncontested and administered his oath. Notable to inform the ruling BJD has won a record 25 ZP seats out of a total of 26 in the Jagatsinghpur district.

The Tirtol block Zilla Parishad [ZP] zone 2 elected member Sujata Mohanty designated as Jagatsinghpur ZP vice president unopposed. The elections for the ZP vice president post was held in Sadbhabana Sabha Gruha here, collector Parul Patwari administered the oath to the new ZP vice president Mohanty in presence of all elected ZP members,

Jagatsinghpur MLA Prashant Muduli, ZP president Manoj Bhoi, ADM Jagatsinghpur, district Panchayat Officer and other officials.


Meanwhile, vice-chairperson elections for Panchayat Samiti spread in all eight blocks of Jagatsinghpur district have been completed. Official reports revealed that vice-chairpersons elected for different Panchayat Samiti's reported as Jagatsinghpur Panchayat Samiti Ratiranjan Behera, Naugaion Sujit Kumar Puhana, Balikuda Priyambada Palavari, Erasama Bikash Kumar Parida, Kujanga Gyanajit swain, Tirtol Sandhya Rani Mohanty, Biridi Pinaki Priyadarshani, Raghunathpur Devasis Tripathy. 

## Congress bags J'spur municipality, BJD retains Paradip

JAGATSINGHPUR, March 28: The ULB votes counted, and the results were declared on Saturday. Congress candidate Archana Singh was elected as the new chairwoman of Jagatsinghpur municipality, and Basanta

Rajashree 9248 votes while BJP remained at third position earned 1447 votes, BSP aspirant 102 votes, there were four candidates were contesting for the municipality chairwoman post. Moreover, election results for councilors revealed that BJD candidates won in 9 wards, Congress 7, BJP 2, and independent 3.

In Paradeep Municipality BJD candidate Basanta Kumar Biswal emerged victorious defeated independent candidate Debadatta Sahoo by a huge margin of 8760 votes. Basanta polled 14938 votes, Debadatta 6178, BJP 4516, another independent 2062 votes.

Apart from the election of the councilors for the Paradeep civic body, the results informed that trade unionist Bapi Sarkhel backed independent candidates won in 8 wards, BJD 7, BJP 3, congress 1 out of total 19 wards. 



Kumar Biswal was elected as chairman of Paradeep urban body.


Official reports informed that congress backed candidate Archana Singh won the Jagatsinghpur municipality chairwoman post while defeating BJD candidate Rajashree Mohapatra by a slender margin of 220 votes. Archana Singh polled 9468 votes,

## Scribe Ajaya Jena passes away

JAGATSINGHPUR, March 28: A working journalist Ajaya Kumar Jena passed away while he was being shifted to SCB Medical College and hospital in Cuttack for treatment on Sunday wee hours. He was 67. Late Jena was injured in a minor road accident on Thursday and was admitted to DHH and returned to the residence after treatment. But, later on, he suffered from chest pain on Saturday night and was immediately admitted to the hospital where his condition turned critical.

While being shifted to Cuttack for treatment, he passed away on the way. Jena's body was brought to his village Baragola under the Raghunathpur block, where scores of scribes across the district, politicians, lawyers, and eminent personalities Have visited Jena's residence and paid floral tribute, later his mortal remains were consigned to flame in the village crematorium. A palm of gloom was descended in Jagatsinghpur headquarters after Jena's death news reached, during his three decades of journalism he had



been possessing an unblemished professional carrier and associated with many journalist associations, social organizations in the district. 

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### Urban polls...

four ULBs of Jeypore, Koraput, Sunabeda and Kotpad. According to preliminary reports, 63 pc polling was recorded in Koraput municipality, 52 pc in Jeypore municipality, 55 pc in Sunabeda municipality and 70 pc in Kotpad NAC. The administration had made elaborate arrangements and security was beefed up in booths termed sensitive.

In Jeypore, there were reports of a commotion over fake voters in Sambar Tota school and a minor clash between two groups in Jaynagar area. Many voters from Ward 21, 22 and 26 alleged that they were unable to exercise their franchise as their names were missing from the voters' list. The situation was brought under control after police intervened.

Kendrapara municipality saw many first-time voters this time. Of 36,718 voters, around 4,000 were newly added to the list. As a result, many candidates of various political parties were banking heavily on young people who flocked to the meetings and rallies, said Dhiren Sahoo, a senior BJD leader. Kendrapara municipality recorded 74.31 pc polling

on the day.

In Kalahandi district, Bhawanipatna Municipality reported just over 50 pc polling with 51.38 pc voter turnout. Dharmagarh, Junagarh and Kesinga NACs reported 74.70 pc, 71.45 pc and 70.99 pc voting respectively. The polling was more or less peaceful in all the four centres, except for a stray incident of tension between BJD and BJP workers in Junagarh NAC.

Polling was overall smooth in Malkangiri district too. Malkangiri municipality recorded 63.61 pc voter turnout and Balimela NAC 74.17 pc. Elections for Sundargarh, Rajgangpur and Birmiritapur ULBs also concluded peacefully amid low polling percentage compared to the just concluded rural elections in Sundargarh district.

Administration sources said the three municipalities' recorded average polling at about 62.66 pc, a drop of about 16.34 pc against rural polls. Jharsuguda saw 68.36 pc polling in Jharsuguda municipality, Brajrajnagar municipality and Belpahar municipality in the district.



# DAE-BRNS outreach Theme Meeting inaugurated at Maharaja S C B University

Baripada, March 28: A three-day-long outreach theme meeting on "Societal Applications of Nuclear Science and Technology" organized by the Department of Atomic Energy - Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (GoI) was inaugurated on Friday in Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanjadeo University (MSCBU), Baripada by Chief Guest Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Director, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

As many as 26 eminent nuclear scientists of India were part of the delegation who attended this outreach meeting. As a historic occasion for the state, this is for the first time in Odisha that a high profile delegation from the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) led by Dr. Ajit K. Mohanty,



Director, BARC including scientists from BARC, Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS), Institute of Physics and NISER visited the University. Chief Guest of the event Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty in his address had recalled the history and glory of his birthplace Mayurbhanj and his educational life in

Mayurbhanj. He envisioned the popularisation of Mayurbhanj Chhau dance in the country and informed that soon Mayurbhanj Chhau will be performed in Anushakti Nagar, the residential township of BARC in Mumbai. He also remembered Prof. Jogesh Pati who is a son of the soil of Baripada and highlighted

his contribution to nuclear physics. He expressed that research should not be restricted to the laboratory rather it should reach the real life of the masses.

Chairman of the organizing committee and National Convener of the program, Dr. Raghunath Acharya, Scientific Officer, Radio Chemistry Division,

BARC outlined the theme and detailed the three days activities. Dr. P. K. Pujari, Director, Radiochemistry & Isotope Group, BARC in his address thanked Prof. Basa the Vice-Chancellor for conducting such a mega episode in the State of Odisha. He emphasized that conducting such a program at the university level will help in the easy transfer and dispersion of knowledge to the common people.

The University felicitated Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty for being conferred on 'Bhumiputra Sanmana'. On behalf of BARC, Dr. Mohanty donated a GM counter to the University for the benefit of students. On behalf of the University, all the dignitaries present on the stage were felicitated with the mementos. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Basa

felicitated Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty's mother Smt Ratnamani Mohanty with Uttariya. Former Health Minister of Jharkhand, Dr. Dinesh Sadangi honored Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty with Uttariya and urged the scientists to address health issues in the Jaduguda region due to uranium mining.

As part of the commemoration of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', this event was being jointly organized by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences, Institute of Physics (IOP), National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), and Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanjadeo University in association with Indian Association of Nuclear Chemists & Allied Scientists (IANCAS).

## Illegal sand lifting flourishes under nose of district administration



Baripada, March 28: The district administration was directed by the revenue department not to allow lifting sand at around a 500-meter radius for the protection of

columns of an old bridge and ongoing construction of a bridge over Budhabalanga River at Madhuban under Baripada municipality. But, a huge quantity of sand unauthorized

being lifted every day within the said radius with the help of JCB machine; thanks to the alleged nexus of the revenue department and mafias.

The residents said that more than 40 to 50 tractors lift the sand within the 500 meters radius of the two bridges every day. Regular lifting of huge sand is making various woes like flood threat, change the course of river and land sliding on both sides in which residents of Madhuban in Baripada municipality and

residents Poda-Astia under Shamakhunta block are worst affected.

Some residents said the sand lifting was stopped that lasted only four to five days after someone made viral a video of the illegal sand lifting at bridges sites on social media. Again the illegal sand lifting of sands resumed as before.

Baripada Tehsildar Bikram Kishore Parida said that he had ordered officers to conduct a raid to check the illegal practice.

## Shortage of professors, and poor space hit medical services in RDC of PRM MCH

Baripada, March 28: Resentment is brewing among the patients as the Radio Diagnosis Imagine department of Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital (PRM MCH) at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district delivers poor health services due to shortage of doctors and poor space in RDC campus.

Official sources said a Professor post is lying vacant from first November 2021, a Senior Resident (SR) post out of two sanctioned is vacant from February 2022 and an Associate Professor post has been vacant when Baripada district headquarters hospital was

upgraded to a medical college and hospital from 2017.

Similarly, at least two out of seven radiographers' posts are lying vacant since it became a medical college and hospital. The two radiographer posts have been reserved for ST.

Vacant of the major posts in the Radio Diagnosis Imagine department of the medical college hits the healthcare facilities to patients. The poor space in the department also causes problems for patients to move from one department to another department.

There a good number of patients come to the

department every day from the district and patients from fringe villages of Balasore district and outside States like West Bengal and Jharkhand.

A medical staff member, who anonymity her name, said that more than 250 patients have come to the department for X-ray reports and more than 150 patients have come for ultrasound reports. Due to poor space, the patients are waiting outside the department under open sky. The patients are facing inconvenience to get test reports from the department as major posts are lying vacant. Saroj Kumar

Mohanty, a resident of Purnachandrapur Ward No-15 in Baripada municipality said that he had to wait more than four hours to get his ultrasound report. He said that due increasing of patients' number, the staff of the department had advised the patients to come in next days and the emergency and critically cases were immediately handled in the department he said.

The Principal of the medical institution and The Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) should intervene into the matter as it was a health related issue, demanded some patients.

## A wild bear suffering from severe injury dies on Friday

Baripada, March 28: A wild bear suffering from severe injuries was being treated. Its condition deteriorated allegedly due to poor treatment by the concerned department died on Friday afternoon.

The wild animal was found straying to the human settlement of Purunapani village under Thakurmunda range within Karanjia forest division of Mayurbhanj district for the last couple of days and it created panic to residents. Either it pleaded for treatment from the severe injuries or got aggressive for the same cause had frequently strayed into the human

settlement from Similipal forest. Risk of his attack, the local people could not take any steps to rescue them from the injury treatments.



The residents alleged that the injuries which were spotted on the animal's back portion of the body were either made by an arrow or poachers trying to kill it.

This afternoon, the bear last breathed, thanks to the forest department and veterinary doctor of STR for their apathy towards the injured wild bear.

Contacted, the Deputy Range Officer of Thakurmunda range, Kishor Panigrahi said that the infighting between two bears was the reason behind injuries of the wild bear. The infighting was suspected to have taken place around eight days back, and the injury later turned to septic, consequently, the animal died.

A veterinary doctor of STR reached the range officer this afternoon, and the autopsy will be on Saturday morning.



## NGT lens on recovery of mining money



CUTTACK, March 18: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the district magistrate & collector (Keonjhar) to appear before it in connection with the

recovery of Rs 7.30 crore as environmental compensation from those involved in illegal mining of laterite stone in Madanpur under Ghasipura tehsil

Expressing dissatisfaction over the sluggish pace of recovery, NGT's east zone bench in Kolkata asked the district magistrate & collector (Keonjhar), along with the Ghasipura tehsildar "to be present physically before the tribunal on April 29".

The green body issued the order after state counsel Samapika Mishra informed on

Tuesday that a total amount of Rs 2,21,746 had been recovered as on that day.

The tribunal observed that the total recovered amount is just 0.25% of the Rs 7.30 crore as environmental compensation computed to be recovered from illegal miners in 2019. The bench of Justice B Amit Sthalekar (judicial member) and Justice Saibal Dasgupta (expert member) directed the government to file an affidavit indicating what steps have been taken for the recovery of the remaining amount.

## JSW's new CCCC to minimize pilferages

Barbil, March 16: Country's leading steel manufacturer JSW Steel Ltd inaugurated the Central Command Control Centre (CCCC) at its Barbil office on March 11, 2022.

The CCCC was formally inaugurated by Ranjan Nayak, COO (Odisha) of JSW Steel Ltd. Nayak congratulated the Odisha team for being one step ahead on digital technology. Project Head (Odisha) Ashesh Padhy, Mines Head (Odisha) Biswaranjan Padhi and other employees were also present at the inauguration. In this connection, Head of IT Division, JSW Steel Ltd, Odisha BK Das said, "The CCCC will provide a real-time visibility of dispatch operations, tracing of each fleet and dispatch vehicles from Pit to Port. Also, it will make easy to monitor and control the operation and to reduce pilferages."

Das also stated that the CCCC connects all 4 mines through cloud to Barbil office which will be integrated with Central Surveillance System and Fleet Management System. Adding further, Das said that the CCCC with digital intervention will create an error free system, reduce Turn Around Time (TAT), increase productivity and eliminate pilferage and enhance dispatch efficiency.

## 6 More Odisha Govt Officers Get Compulsory Retirement For Corruption



Bhubaneswar: In pursuance of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's policy of zero tolerance towards inefficient and corrupt officials, the Odisha government has awarded compulsory retirement to another six officials who include one Chief Engineer, three Executive Engineers and two Block Education Officers. As of now 164 officials have been terminated from service or have been awarded compulsory retirement,

said an official press release issued today.

Out of the aforementioned six officials, Chief Engineer (Electrical) Sambalpur, Sunil Kumar Panda has a corruption case against him. Panda was in possession of Rs 3.26 crore disproportionate assets. He was also suspended on this account. He was awarded compulsory retirement for corruption. Executive Engineer, Rural Works (Electrical Division) of Berhampur Jagannath Sethi had a corruption case against him. He

was in possession of Rs 7.63 crore disproportionate assets and he was under suspension on this account. He was awarded compulsory retirement for corruption. Similarly, Executive Engineer (Testing & Calibration) and Deputy Electrical Inspector of Bhubaneswar Deepak Kumar Bhuyan had two corruption cases against him. He was awarded compulsory retirement for corruption. Executive Engineer (ED & Inspection) and Deputy Electrical Inspector of Bhubaneswar Prasanta Kumar Mishra has a corruption case against him. He was awarded compulsory retirement for corruption. Block Education Officer of Gunupur in Rayagada district under School & Mass

Education Department Antaryami Behera has a corruption case against him. He had taken a bribe of Rs 10,000. He was arrested on March 2 this year and on the next day, he was forwarded to court. He has been awarded compulsory retirement for corruption. Similarly, Block Education Officer of Nuagada in Gajapati district Braja Kumar Nayak has a corruption case against him. He was caught by Vigilance officials while he was accepting a bribe of Rs 30,000 in his office. He was awarded compulsory retirement for corruption. Including these six, as of now, 164 officials have been awarded compulsory retirement and their pensions have been stopped.

## Chief Secretary and 5T Secretary Visit Rourkela

Odisha will be hosting the FIH Men's World Cup Hockey Championship, for the second consecutive time, in January, next year. In 2018 it was held at Bhubaneswar only whereas the next world cup matches will be held jointly at Kalinga Hockey Stadium Bhubaneswar and this state-of-the-art facility (Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium) at Rourkela. The stadium touted as India's largest hockey stadium is being built at the BPUT complex. The stadium will have a spectator capacity of over 20,000. Practice turfs, advanced fitness center, and floodlights.

To review the progress of construction work of the stadium Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra and Secretary to CM (5T) VK Pandian visited Rourkela on 18th March. Principal Secretary Industries Hemant Sharma, Secretary Sports, and Youth Services R. Vineel Krishna, and Managing Director IDCO Bhopinder Singh Poonia were also present in the review meeting. After reviewing the progress of the stadium, they advised the officials concerned to expedite the work for the timely completion of the project.

Apart from stadium work, they also looked at various other development projects under construction hereunder Rourkela Smart City such as the Rourkela-One project, a Traffic Command Centre, Proposed Tribal Museum, Convention Hall, Market Complex, etc.

After the visit to different infrastructural projects, Chief Secretary Mahapatra directed the concerned authorities to complete several ongoing projects as per the schedule.

## From Page-1

## Naveen Patnaik...

go to Kalinga Stadium to attend hockey events it was inexplicable as to how he was giving the assembly a miss. Senior Congress MLA Tara Bahinipati had also slammed Patnaik saying the CM could tour districts to launch the state-sponsored Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana smart health card, inaugurate a state-run restaurant in Bhubaneswar but could not show up in the House.

The current session will last for only 6 days during which a vote on account for the first 4 months of the 2022-23 financial year would be passed. The session will conclude on March 31. A full-fledged Budget is not being presented due to the imposition of the model code of conduct due to the ensuing civic body polls. According to the schedule, the Budget for the year 2022-2023 will be presented by state finance minister Niranjana Pujari on March 30 and the Appropriation Bill will be tabled on March 31.

## Former Odisha Minister Ripunath Seth Passes Away At 67

Bhubaneswar: Former Odisha Minister Ripunath Seth passed away at Barpali on Sunday. He was 67. Seth complained of uneasiness in the morning and was rushed to a private hospital in Barpali where he succumbed. Seth, a Congress veteran served as a Minister in former Chief Minister JB Patnaik's cabinet. He was elected to the assembly from

Bijepur in 1995 on a Congress ticket. A native of Barpali in Bargarh district, Seth held the School & Mass Education Minister, Energy and Sports portfolios during the Congress Government in Odisha from 1995 to 2000. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled the death of Seth and expressed his sympathy for the bereaved family members. Senior po-



litical leaders from different parts of the State expressed their condolences on the demise of Seth.



# Breakdown of neutrality in bureaucracy



Sirish C. Mohanty

Four months before India began its "tryst with destiny", the nascent nation's first Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, played a critical role in integrating the princely states into the Indian Union, spoke to the first batch of Indian Administrative Service officers at Metcalf House in Delhi. In that special address on April 21, 1947, Patel outlined the task before civil servants in an Independent India and laid down certain principles of 'Surajya' or good governance.

"Your predecessors were brought up in the traditions in which they kept themselves aloof from the common run of the people. It will be your bounden duty to treat the common men in India as your own," he said on April 21, a date marked ever since as 'Civil Services Day'.

However, his role in establishing the modern-day IAS institution in place of the British-era Indian Civil Services (ICS) goes a lot further than that landmark address.

Home Minister Sardar Patel to the first batch of IAS officers Post-Independence said- "Today, my Secretary can write a note

opposed to my views. I have given that freedom, to all my Secretaries. I have told them, 'If you do not give your honest opinion for fear that it will displease your Minister, please then you better go. I will bring another Secretary.' I will never be displeased over a frank expression of opinion." "Sardar's heart was big enough to appreciate merit and he wanted the services to be steadfast to their traditions of efficiency, impartiality, and equality. However, the real test for Patel came after Independence.

The IAS was suggested to be controlled by the Federal (Union) Public Service Commission of the Central Government, though the officers might be posted in various provinces". Patel, once again, had his way, and provisions offering special safeguards to those in the services were inserted into the Constitution under Article 312(2) in Part XIV, giving birth to the modern IAS and IPS.

In October 1951, Parliament passed the All India Services Act, which laid down the rules of recruitment and service conditions. Patel, unfortunately, had met his demise on December

15, 1950, nearly a full year before the All India Services Act was passed in Parliament. However, by then, Patel had established an institution that has stood the test of time producing officers with a range of capabilities or generalists to oversee different aspects of administration.

After independence the deterioration of political values begins. So does a sea of changes took place in performance by the Bureaucrats. All India service officers are nowadays are more loyal to the state governments rather than their parent government in the Center. Appallingly they have gone miles away from their training and probation. Contrastingly, most have readopted the behavior of their erstwhile ICS fraternity. The behavior of the former CS of Bengal during the cyclone has been a burning example. Wrong interpretations of federalism by some state governments patronize grades down the performing value of the bureaucrats. All India cadre officers should by heart and should be neutral as they are the real representative of the Union government to help, guide, and

monitor the functioning of the concerned state governments. For any deviation, they are duty-bound to bring it to the notice of the state government and the union government as well.

After the success of the state's ruling Party, IAS, IPS officers of Odisha congratulated the Chief Minister on BJD's victory in local polls. It had raised many eyebrows and drawn flak by the political parties and the public in general. However, when there is a change of guards in government after a general election, the top bureaucrats normally meet the new leader to get acquainted with the new government. But in Odisha, the ULB polls don't get a change of government; hence congratulating the CM on this occasion stamps the numerous allegations leveled as authentic.


The Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress in Odisha said on Monday that there was a complete breakdown of neutrality in the Odisha bureaucracy, a day after senior IAS and IPS officers congratulated Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for the Biju Janata Dal's victory in the rural and urban polls. The two Opposition parties said instead of aiding the political leadership in running the government, bureaucrats have become "collaborators in political activities" in the State.

According to the Chief Minister's Office, Chief Secretary Suresh Mohapatra and Director General of Police Sunil Kumar Bansal on Sunday led IAS and IPS officers respectively to congratulate Mr. Patnaik on the twin wins. Besides, officers of the Odisha

Administrative Services, Odisha Police Service Association, and other associations too joined in to wish the Chief Minister.

"The gesture is not in good taste. IAS and IPS officers, who belong to the all-India cadre, bowing before the head of a political party violate ethics. Different service association members meeting the BJD supremo vindicates our allegation that the ruling party has been winning elections using the State machinery," said BJP state general secretary. He said the officers had taken an oath to work for the State by staying impartial and such subservience to political masters "is a crime against the people of Odisha".

Congress leader Satya Nayak said that the real cadre of the BJD is the State bureaucracy. "They congratulated Mr. Patnaik on his party's political victory. It is a violation of the service code of conduct by the IAS and IPS officers. The bureaucracy as an institution has ceased to exist in the State," he said.

Retired IAS and IPS officers too expressed shock over officers being paraded before the head of a political party following its victory in the grassroots-level elections. "It has been a tradition that the State's Chief Secretary and DGP usually go to wish a Chief Minister who returns to power following a State election. But officers going to congratulate the CM for a party victory has never been witnessed before," said a former Odisha Chief Secretary. 

## Odisha Interim Budget: Programme Expenditure Hiked To Rs 1.10L Crore

Bhubaneswar: Out of the Rs1.10 lakh crore, Rs1 lakh crore has been allocated for government sector and the remaining Rs10,000 crore for other sectors.

While an allocation of Rs3,200 crore has been made for natural disaster management, Rs12,200 crore has been allocated for Health sector.

Similarly, Rs1,864 crore has been provided under the scheme of Bijua Swasthya Kalyan Yojana for free medical facilities to over 96 lakh economically



vulnerable families in the State.

For the several programmes under Mission Shakti, a provision of Rs2,000 crore has been made while Rs1,039 crore has been extended for the

- **Out of the Rs1.10 lakh crore, Rs1 lakh crore has been allocated for government sector and the remaining Rs10,000 crore for other sectors.**
- **State Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari on Wednesday presented the interim budget for the financial year 2022-23 with a provision of Rs1.10 lakh crore for programme expenditure.**

National Livelihood Mission. A provision of Rs773 crore has been made towards financial


assistance to self help groups (SHGs) and their federations while Rs176 crore for

construction of Mission Shakti houses and Rs 26,492 crore for Education and Skill Development sectors have been made.

At the same time, Rs20,344 of sectoral outlay for different schemes to boost productivity, farmers' income and welfare has been made. For KALIA scheme, an allocation of Rs 1,874 crore has been made.

Pujari told the House that the Russia-Ukraine war has affected the world economy to a large extent. Despite

that, there is a possibility of a growth in the gross domestic product (GDP). India's GDP growth has been estimated at 7.8 percent. In contrast, Odisha's GDP may increase by 9 to 9.5 percent, he said.

The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth of Odisha is expected to be over 12 percent during the financial year 2022-23, Pujari said, adding the State has been receiving successive revenue surplus since 2005-06. 



# Connotation of the BJD Victory in Odisha's ULB Polls



Sirish C. Mohanty

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) registered an impressive victory in the elections for urban local bodies across Odisha, consigning the BJP to a distant second place. The result reaffirmed BJD's uninterrupted "pro-incumbency", spanning 23 years. This is rare in the annals of the electoral history of Odisha and India.

Out of a total of 108 urban local bodies, the BJD registered a thumping victory in 95, and the BJP and Congress were relegated to distant second and third positions by winning only 6 and 4 respectively. Independent candidates could win only in 3 councils.

The much higher vote share of the BJD over the BJP and the Congress in these elections reveals the former's preeminent position over its opponents.



Tum agar miljao, Odisha chhod denge hum

direct elections conducted for the post of chairpersons of different urban local bodies and mayors of the three municipal corporations, the BJD registered an overwhelming victory, and its vote shares a staggering 48%. The BJP and the Congress could gather only 29% and 12% of the votes.



Dushman dushman, jo diston se pyara hai

For instance, for the elections of councilors, the BJD's vote share is a whopping 50% - in contrast with the BJP and Congress's vote shares of 27% and 12% respectively. The vote share of independent candidates was just 9%. It is instructive to note that in the

The BJP's poor performance in 2022 stands in sharp contrast to its record of winning nearly 300 Zilla Parishad seats in 2017. The BJP's electoral debacle in Odisha comes close on the heels of its recent successes in assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh,

Uttarakhand, Manipur, and Goa is also significant.

Such a downfall for the saffron party - which often touts itself as the biggest party in the world - has prompted many commentators and analysts to question: are regional parties in a better position to defeat the BJP than national ones like the Congress?

Odisha CM and BJD president Naveen Patnaik in a tweet said his party's huge victory proves that people at the ward and grassroots levels have reaffirmed their trust and faith in the party. Let us have a look at the factors behind the party's victory.

While the BJD's wins have become a routine aspect of Odisha politics for more than two decades, they should not be understood only in terms of seats won and vote shares secured. It has other deeper dimensions which are as significant to the society and polity of Odisha as they are for the whole of India, which is confronting divisive and polarised narratives since 2014.

The BJD's victory owed a lot to the support of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The policy stances taken by Patnaik and concrete measures adopted by him in the recent past for the inclusion of OBCs

in several aspects of governance and his support to conduct a caste census have endeared him to the OBCs.

The other distinguishing aspect of the BJD's victory in Zilla Parishads is that in its long list of winning candidates, more than 60% are women. Women have emerged as presidents of 70% of the Zilla Parishads - more than the 50% reserved for women.

In elections to choose the mayors for Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and Berhampur cities, two women from the BJD emerged victorious - Sulochana Das in Bhubaneswar and Sanghamitra Dalai in Berhampur. These events are a clear sign of the BJD's commitment to giving more opportunities to women in the electoral fray and ensuring their representation in local body elections.

Huge representation of women at the grassroots level has made local bodies a nursery for women leaders, allowing them to address governance problems from their unique perspective but also helping them take the plunge into the rough and tumble of politics and public life.

In the 2019 general elections, the BJD had fielded seven women candidates - 33% of the state's 21 Lok Sabha seats. That historic and trendsetting decision - not just for Odisha but the whole country - was fruitful, and five women won.

Representation and empowerment of women flow from Naveen Patnaik's initiative in 2003. It mobilizes women through self-help groups (SHGs) and involves them in government programs. So far, eight million women are part of SHGs. Their support for the BJD is critical in winning elections - whether for the Lok Sabha, assembly, Zilla Parishads, or urban local bodies. Patnaik is aware of the role women play in his party's suc-

cesses. He acknowledged that on the occasion of the BJD's foundation day in 2020 that women of Odisha constitute the party's mainstay.

One is mindful that the BJD has supported several legislations initiated by the Narendra Modi government in parliament. However, that should not diminish the meaning of the BJD's massive victory over the BJP and Congress in these elections.

If we see the outcome of the 22 local and urban polls, contrastingly, we find BJP has never fought the elections. None of the saffron leaders came to campaigns because of the factionalism in the party. Odisha's all eight Lok Sabha members of the BJP didn't join the polls by heart and soul. Nevertheless, there was no homework, no joint decision under the direction of a commanding leader.

In addition, fresh from a crushing defeat in the panchayat elections, odds are stacked against the BJP to face another election within a short span. Thanks to the undiminished popularity of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik combined with the well-oiled election

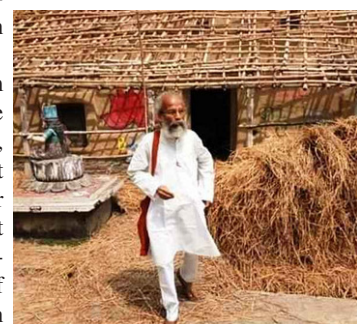
machinery of the BJD, sufficient campaign funds, and dozens of ministers and MLAs always ready to carry out the strategy of a micro-managing core team. With all these, the electoral battle of the ruling party turns into virtually an unbreakable fortress.

In contrast, the BJP appears diminutive with no charismatic leader and no funds to take on the mighty BJD. The massive victory of the regional party in the panchayat elections has demoralized the BJP to such an extent that not many are keen to contest the forthcoming polls to urban local bodies. Finding candidates for seats reserved for scheduled castes

and scheduled tribes has become a tough job for the BJP.

"While the BJD has started poaching a few known faces close to the BJP, certain of a defeat, others are reluctant to contest on party symbol fearing a backlash after the election," said a senior leader of the saffron party. While BJD is struggling with a large crowd of aspirants and many of them trying to show their strength with supporters before the residence of their local MLAs, BJP party offices are wearing a deserted look.

While funds and friendship with BJP's central leaders are not a constraint for the BJD, the case is just reverse for the BJP state unit. The BJP had given Rs 50,000 to each candidate who contested for the post of corporator in 2013 ULB



Pyaar byaar politics to kyaa janu re

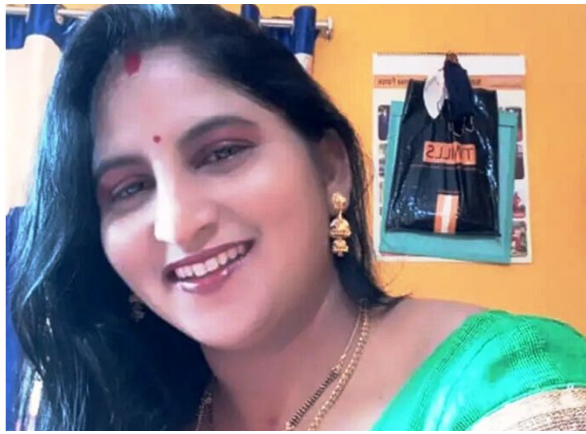
elections. The mayoral candidates were given Rs 5 lakh each. Admitting the fund constraints, State BJP president Samir Mohanty says, "I have no hesitation to say that we are having dearth of funds. The BJD has made election a costly affair." If a BJD candidate could spend at least Rs 30 lakh in the zilla parishad election, one can imagine what will be expenditure for a corporator candidate in municipal corporation poll, he wondered. If BJP that claims to be the largest party in the globe doesn't seriously look into its flaws in Odisha - it has to forget to set foot in the Eastern coast of the country in the near future.



# Prime Accused of Manas Murder, Sharmishta Rout, Her Associate Arrested By CB

Bhubaneswar, March 28: After remaining on the run for the past few days, Sharmishta Rout, the prime accused in the sensational murder case of cameraman Manas Swain, was arrested by the State Crime Branch on Monday.

Along with Sharmishta, her associate Jhuna Bhoi has also been arrested from Nalanga area of Bhadrak district. The duo was arrested by joint teams of Bhadrak police and Crime Branch. Both Sharmishta and Jhuna were returning to Odisha from Kolkata in a bus when they were apprehended. Sources said Sharmishta had spent few



days in Kolkata and Guwahati.

"Both the accused will be produced in the Court of JMFC Chandbali today," said Crime Branch ADG Sanjeeb Panda.

Senior officials said that the Crime Branch will move court seeking at least ten days remand for Sharmishta, her associate and five more persons arrested earlier in connection with the case.

**Along with Sharmishta, her associate Jhuna Bhoi has also been arrested from Nalanga area of Bhadrak district. The duo was arrested by joint teams of Bhadrak police and Crime Branch.**

Sharmishta Rout is the owner of the web channel where the deceased cameraman Manas Swain worked.

Manas Swain, a resident of Godipokhari village in Ranpur area of Nayagarh had gone missing on February 7. He had reportedly come to Bhadrak from Bhubaneswar for shooting a marriage function when he was abducted,

taken to a room at Dayal Ashram in Bhubaneswar, assaulted and tortured. Later, his body was disposed off in Nayagarh.

According to police, Manas was beaten up with bare hands and some weapon. The Chandbali police had recovered Manas' body from Badhipatna hills in Rajsunakhala area of Nayagarh on March 12.

Earlier five persons

including retired Odisha Information Service (OIS) officer Niranjan Sethi have been arrested in connection with the brutal murder of the 28-year-old cameraman.

On Sunday, the Crime Branch has sealed Dayal Ashram, the old age home operated by the prime accused Sharmishta, in Bhubaneswar. The ashram was sealed after the Crime Branch officials along with a forensic team conducted a detailed examination. The team reportedly collected fingerprints from various spots inside the ashram using the 3D camera and CCTV footage of the day of crime.

## RAYAGADA JK Paper Improving Rural Livelihoods through Carbon Credits



Visakhapatnam, March 25: (Jogeswar Das) JK Paper Ltd and VCCSL in association with the World Bank BioCarbon Fund (BioCF) organized a function at Vishakhapatnam on 22nd March 2022 for distribution of cheques to farmers towards revenue obtained from the sale of carbon credits. This was the second event organized for the same; the first was held at Jaykaypur.

The farmers were presented cheques by Shri Biswajeet Dwivedi, Vice President (Commercial), JKPL Dr. M. Satyanarayana, President, Veda Climate Change Solutions Ltd, Dr. Nandani Salaria, IFS, Director Visakhapatnam Zoo, Dr. A J Rao, Member Environment Appraisal Committee for Industry, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC),

practices" under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) to bring over 30,000 ha of land under Agroforestry over the next five years in AP, Odisha, and Telangana. This would benefit around 20,000 farmers through the sale of the carbon revenue generated through their plantations by linking them to the global carbon markets.

A workshop was also organized on the occasion to explore opportunities for developing projects integrating climate change mitigation and poverty alleviation strategies to provide local as well as global benefits sustainably. Dr. M. Satyanarayana chaired the

**For the first time in India, small and marginal farmers in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh are benefitting twice from the sale of carbon credits from agro-forestry plantations**

Govt of India, Dr. CBS Dutt, Ex Sr. Scientist, ISRO & NRSA. In all, around 900 farmers in AP out of a total of 1455 farmers will be receiving amounts towards the sale of carbon revenue generated through their agroforestry plantations.

Having successfully implemented this first of its kind project in South Asia through the PPP model, another project on similar lines was also launched at the event - "Enhancing Rural Livelihoods through Carbon Sequestration by adopting Agroforestry

technical sessions which were moderated by Shri Sai Kishore of VCCSL & participants were Shri Anant Shankar, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Visakhapatnam, Shri B Janaki Rao, Regional Coordinator, AP State Biodiversity Board, Mr. Chaitanya Sure (Climate Partner, Munich), Dr. C.B.S. Dutt, Ex Senior Scientist, ISRO & NRSA, Shri B.P. Rathi, General Manager, JKPL, Ms. Manali Bhaduri (Emergent Ventures India Pvt. Ltd), and Mr. G. Prasad Babu (CEO, Geo Climate Risk Solutions).

## Odisha's EOW arrests prime accused in Rs. 100-crore loan fraud case

Bhubaneswar, March 18: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police arrested Dipak Kindo, Managing Director of Sambandh Finserve Private Limited, in connection with ₹ 100 crore-loan embezzlement case.

Annapurna Finance Private Limited, a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), had filed a complaint that Mr. Kindo had fraudulently availed loan to the tune of ₹ 5 crore from it on the basis of forged documents and misappropriated the same without refunding the amount.

The EOW investigation found that both companies were registered with the Reserve Bank of India as NBFC and microfinance institutions.

During 2020, Mr. Kindo's company had taken a loan of ₹ 5 crores for carrying out financial activities by giving loans to different Self Help Groups and Joint Liability Groups. The company, however, never repaid the loan.

"During the course of investigation it has been ascertained that the accused company, during the period from 2015 to 2020, had raised funds of more than ₹ 109 crores from different investors and lenders like DCB Bank, SIDBI (Small Industries Development

Amrita Kindo, wife of Dipak Kindo.

"Investigators came across 61 bank accounts relating Sambandh Finserve Private Limited, its MD Deepak Kindo in different nationalised and private banks and the available balance of more than ₹ 17.10



Bank of India), BOPA PTE Ltd. (a Singapore based Company) and DIA Vikash Capital Private Limited in a similar manner," the EOW said here.

The loan amounts were diverted to their personal accounts and accounts of sister concern companies including Diya Dairy Agro Processor Private Limited, director of which was

crores were subsequently been frozen," it said..

Amrita Kindo, wife of prime accused, was sent to jail following her arrest. She had availed more than ₹ 22 crores out of the embezzled money. She is currently lodged in jail. As Mr. Kindo was absconding, evading police arrest, a Look out Circular was earlier issued in his name.



# A great leap in international trade

The new record of \$400 billion of goods exports has made a mark in the global business arena, reclaiming India's status as a major trading power

India's achievement of a record \$400 billion of goods exports is a shining example of the way this country is being governed, reformed, and transformed since 2014 with a mission to decisively improve the lives of citizens. The surge in exports is helping farmers, artisans, weavers and factory workers, and enabling businesses, small and large, create jobs, scale up operations, become more competitive, and make a mark in the global business arena. The export target of \$400 billion seemed impossible to many in a Covid-ravaged world, where demand was weak, containers were scarce and priced exorbitantly, and the world was facing job losses and conflicts. But this did not deter Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's government from acting decisively and swiftly with a bottom-up approach in assessing the situation, identifying products and regions where exports could be increased, and adopting a partnership approach with exporters and industry bodies to deliver results. The exports mission was revved up when the PM gave a clarion call to industry to focus on exports and inspired them



Exports are contributing to economic growth and creating jobs.

to aspire for a quantum jump in India's international trade in goods and services. The PM himself held consultations with ministries, states, Indian missions abroad, commodity boards, industry associations and experts to motivate and inspire all. He monitored the progress of exports continuously. It was indeed an ambitious mission because the best India achieved in merchandise exports in the past was \$330 billion in the pre-Covid days of 2018-19, after which the pandemic battered all global trade. But India bounced back rapidly as policy measures, reforms, export-promotion schemes, major initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive Scheme, and bold decisions in the face of

adversity propelled India to become the fastest growing major economy in the world. Exports boomed, setting a series of monthly records that have added up to historic achievement in 2021-22. Exports are contributing to economic growth, creating jobs and helping small businesses and workers. The world is now looking up to India as a trustworthy and reliable partner which can provide quality goods and services on time even at the peak of the pandemic. The results are spectacular. India achieved the target nine days ahead of schedule. We adopted the whole-of-government approach and worked as partners with exporters. The government proactively helped them overcome any hurdle and

encouraged them to grab every opportunity for every product in every country to help achieve the stiff target. Targets were fixed for 200 countries/territories, and special emphasis was laid on new and existing markets, lost market share, and the role of small enterprises and startups as a vehicle for exports. But it's not just a story of numbers. There are exciting new developments such as the export of new products, penetration of new markets, rising exports of manufactured products, an impressive 50% growth in engineering exports, and laudable contribution of small businesses and farmers, whose hard work has strengthened global food security. Agricultural exports have risen nearly 25% to a record of nearly \$50 billion. India's farmers provide almost half of the globally traded rice. Farmers have helped wheat exports jump to a record seven million tonnes, which is softening the impact of the disruption in the global wheat trade caused by the crisis in Ukraine, a major supplier. Similarly, coffee exports have risen to a record of nearly \$1 billion, an impressive achievement for the sector

where 95% of the output is from small growers. Marine exports are also booming, helping many small businesses and fishermen. India now needs to maintain the momentum. Our manufacturers, exporters and policymakers cannot afford to be complacent in a fiercely competitive world. Indian industry needs to step up investment in research and development and focus on quality. There was a time when there was a big gap between products sold to Indian citizens and the export quality goods that were shipped out. There should be no such gap. The government will scale up efforts to help exporters. Many recent policies will bear fruits for years to come and give the country new global champions in manufacturing and exports. There will be many success stories like the mobile phone sector, which was once heavily import-dependent, but where, now exports have multiplied and imports are drying up. Exporters will also gain from the PM Gati Shakti scheme, the National Master Plan for multimodal connectivity which the PM launched last October. We now have to make a bigger

impact in international trade. This will be challenging, but exciting and achievable. Our government has a track record of achieving very ambitious targets, be it electrification of every village in the country, the dramatic rise in renewable energy capacity along with the equally dramatic fall in its cost, the LED revolution that drastically reduced the cost of energy-efficient bulbs, as well as game-changing welfare schemes to provide ordinary citizens with the convenience of toilets, cooking gas, bank accounts, health insurance, water supply, homes, rural roads, internet connectivity and the world's largest vaccination programme against Covid-19 with the help of vaccines made in India. India is on track to reclaim its status as the major trading power that it once was. That is an ambitious mission, but the story of Indian exports - like many game-changing initiatives in New India - can be summed up with what Nelson Mandela famously said: "It always seems impossible until it's done." Piyush Goyal is Union minister of commerce and industry, consumer affairs and food and public distribution and textiles.

## Chinese FM's Delhi visit may be a beginning, but repairing ties is a long haul

The Sino-Indian relationship has been at its lowest point in three decades since Beijing tore up a decade's worth of agreements for maintaining peace and tranquility at the border and sent troops into India's side of the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh in 2020.

Beijing's outreach to Delhi last week with a visit by Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi was not expected to bring about any dramatic changes in bilateral ties. The relationship has been at its lowest point in three decades since Beijing tore up a decade's worth of agreements for maintaining peace and tranquility at the border and sent troops into India's side of the Line of Actual Control in eastern

*While India rightly focused on the Ladakh border, from the Chinese point of view, the visit was likely made to gauge if India would be willing to play ball by attending the BRICS summit.*

Ladakh in 2020. What it has done though is to convey that while Delhi cannot consider the relationship normal so long as troops continue to face off at "friction points" in the Ladakh heights, it is prepared to be pragmatic and engage at a fairly high level to talk about other day-to-day issues including trade and visas for students.

The pragmatism has been in evidence even before this. Despite the worst patch in the relations, India-China

trade has touched new highs. Even though the words status quo ante was not used, both External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Adviser A K Doval have conveyed that the Ladakh issue has to be resolved expeditiously before the relationship can become normal. That much was evident in the secrecy around the visit, apparently at the request of the Chinese side, and the palpably cold reception Wang received in



Delhi. If Wang was keen to convey where he was coming from - quite literally from Pakistan, where he backed OIC's "aspirations" for Kashmir, and Afghanistan, where he welcomed the Taliban's desire to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative, both red rags for Delhi - India responded in kind by lashing out at him

for his remarks on Kashmir, on which it said China had "no locus standi to comment", and pointing out that India refrains from commenting on China's "internal issues". While India rightly focused on the Ladakh border, from the Chinese point of view, the visit was likely made to gauge if India

would be willing to play ball by attending, at a time of great geopolitical flux, the BRICS summit in June this year in China, as well as the Russia-India-China summit. For Beijing and Moscow, having Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, along with the leaders of South Africa and Brazil, would be an important diplomatic victory. For now, Delhi appears to have conveyed that despite their common stand on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, both sides have their "respective" positions. The call - to attend or not - will have to be made soon, and the decision weighed against what could be gained and what might be lost.



# CM's Delhi visit triggers speculation of support for NDA presidential nominee



CM Naveen Patnaik left for Delhi on Monday on a three-day visit

**The Odisha CM's visit has assumed significance considering that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government is about 1.2 per cent away from the total votes it needs for its candidate to win.**

senior NDA ministers to extend his party's support to BJP's Presidential candidate. The election for the new President of India is scheduled in July this year.

Patnaik who took a chartered flight from the Biju Patnaik airport in Bhubaneswar is scheduled to attend the BBC Sports

Woman of the Year Award ceremony in Delhi on Monday evening.

Patnaik had last visited Delhi in September 2021 to attend a meeting of chief ministers of Maoist-hit states convened by Union home minister Amit Shah.

BJD MP Pinaki Mishra said Patnaik's schedule of

meeting leaders of other parties is not clear yet, however BJD insiders indicated that the chief minister would meet leaders of both BJP as well as opposition parties.

The Odisha CM's visit has assumed significance considering that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance

government is about 1.2 per cent away from the total votes it needs for its candidate to win.

BJP's numbers in Uttar Pradesh and the Uttarakhand legislative assembly elections have come down and that has led to a fall in vote-share. In UP assembly, BJP's number has dipped from 312 to 255 between 2017 and 2022. In the current assembly, BJP's allies have 17 members taking the total to 273.

So, the support of the Biju Janata Dal and YSR Congress Party will be crucial for the BJP. With 112 MLAs

and 21 MPs in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Patnaik controls 23,072 votes which would be more than enough for the NDA candidate to win.

People aware of the matter said that Patnaik is likely to hold discussions with BJP leaders about getting one of the 4 Rajya Sabha seats that are going to fall vacant. While 3 seats are going to be vacant on July 1, the seat held by Subas Singh will fall vacant after he resigns from the membership following his election as Mayor of the Cuttack Municipal Corporation.

Bhubaneswar, March 28: Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik left for Delhi on Monday afternoon on a three-day visit amid speculations that he would be meeting

## Chinese Foreign Minister gets a cold welcome in New Delhi

Flew into New Delhi from Kabul and is set to hold talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar



New Delhi, March 24: China's foreign minister Wang Yi has reached Delhi -- the first high-level Chinese visit to India in more than two years, since the stand-off in Ladakh started. Sources said Wang Yi is expected to meet foreign minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Friday.

The aim of Wang Yi's visit is to restart physical engagement and also invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a BRICS meeting to be hosted by Beijing later this year, news agency Press Trust of India has reported.

The suspense over the visit persisted till the last minute and there was no official confirmation of the visit even when the Chinese minister landed in Delhi. The landing could be confirmed only through tracking the flight path of his plane, which took off from Afghanistan.

India-China relations have taken a downturn as Chinese incursions became more frequent in Ladakh and led to the clash in Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian and several Chinese soldiers died.

Repeated rounds of military-level talks have led to de-escalation -- the two sides completed the disengagement process last year in the north and south banks of the Pangong Lake and in the Gogra area. But there has been no return to the status quo that prevailed before 2020.

On March 11, India and China held the 15th round of military dialogue to resolve the pending issues.

## Defects pointed out again in Odisha's PMAY implementation

**Officials said an Action Taken Report of the state government was earlier found to be unsatisfactory and not accepted**

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Over a year after a Union rural development ministry team flagged irregularities in the construction of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin scheme in Odisha, it has again pointed out flaws in the scheme's implementation following its second visit to the state this month.

Officials said the team revisited the state in the first week of March and found that despite an advisory for the PMAY-G logo on the houses constructed under the scheme, the logo of Biju Pucca Ghar, a state government scheme, continue. "In most of the cases, the logo of Biju Pucca Ghar was more prominent than the PMAY-G logo. The construction quality continued to be poor and Awaas survey was not conducted properly," the team said in its fresh report. Officials said the second visit came after the Action Taken Report of the state government on the earlier findings in February last year was found to be

unsatisfactory. The ministry did not accept the report. Under PMAY-G, the ministry gives ₹1.3 lakh assistance to the homeless in Maoist violence-hit and ₹1.2 lakh in other areas to build a minimum of 25 square metre cemented houses. The beneficiary can also avail of 90/95-day wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. ₹2,000 are also provided for the construction of toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission. The Centre and the state provide assistance to the beneficiaries in the ratio of 60:40. As per the ministry's portal, of the 2.69 million houses sanctioned to Odisha under the scheme, 1.68 million, roughly 62%, have been completed. In February last year, a team led by deputy director-general (PMAY-G) Gaya Prasad visited Odisha for an inquiry into state Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) complaints of irregularities in the beneficiary selection. It found violations of norms. The BJP has alleged 85% of the PMAY-G beneficiaries in



Odisha were ineligible for the scheme and most of the funds were utilised for personal gains. It also alleged members of the same families have been sanctioned houses under the scheme.

The central team found some houses were shown to have been completed, but they were incomplete. In some cases, houses were sanctioned to members of the same family. In several houses, the PMAY-G logo was missing.

The ministry later wrote to Odisha chief secretary Suresh Mohapatra suggesting the money sanctioned to ineligible beneficiaries be recovered and cases lodged against government officials for the lapses. It asked the state to take measures to improve the quality of the houses and bring them to a liveable standard.

Odisha submitted its report in July 2021, justifying the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana logo

on the houses as the state government has provided 40% money for them. Odisha panchayatiraj secretary AKK Meena said he is yet to get the fresh report of the central team and would be unable to comment.

Union minister and BJP leader Bishweswar Tudu accused the ruling Biju Janata Dal of favouritism and gifting ineligible party workers PMAY houses instead of deserving beneficiaries to strengthen its vote bank. "Scams to the tune of crores of rupees have been committed in the execution of PMAY in the state...the real beneficiaries have been deprived of its benefit." He added Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a target to provide concrete houses to all eligible beneficiaries under the scheme by 2022. "However, the target has so far remained unfulfilled due to the negligence of the state government."



## Man shot dead in Kerala's Idukki after a tiff over beef curry at roadside eatery

Martin left the place immediately and headed for his house nearby. He came back with a revolver and fired at least five rounds, police said.

curry. Our serving staff told them beef curry was over. They started verbally abusing the staff. Then some of the customers said since it is a shop being managed by women not to make such nasty comments," said the owner of the eating joint P Sowmya. Later they rushed out of the shop and came back in a car and fired shots indiscriminately, she said. She said initially some shots were fired in the air and later they aimed at the crowd.

"The accused is under custody and we found that the revolver was locally-made and we have identified the blacksmith also. We will charge Martin for murder and other charges. His friends will also be detained for questioning," said station house officer E K Soli Mon.

In Kerala, beef is a delicacy and it amounts to 60 per cent of the total meat consumed. Known as poor man's meat around 60 per cent of the population relish the red meat. Not just Muslims and Christians, Hindus also eat the tongue-tickling dishes made of beef. When beef was banned in many north Indian states, Left wing student outfits had conducted beef festivals on many campuses a couple of years ago.



Moolamattum (Kerala), March 27: A man was shot dead and two others injured on Saturday night after an inebriated young man who was annoyed with a roadside eatery in Moolamattum in Idukki district for not serving beef curry, fired shots at a crowd with a country-made weapon, police said.

Philip Martin (26) and two of his friends visited a roadside eating joint (thattu kada) and asked for food. The owner of the eatery, a woman, told them that their favourite dish- beef curry- was over. But they started verbally abusing the owner and later when other customers questioned them, a scuffle took place inside the eatery, the police said.

Martin left the place immediately and headed for his house nearby. He came back with a revolver and fired at least five rounds, police said. One of the bullets hit Sanal Babu (34), a bus conductor, who was standing outside the shop. A bullet hit him on his neck and he died on the way to the hospital while two others were also injured. Both of them are, however, out of danger.

"Dead drunk, they came to our eatery around 10 pm on a bike and asked for beef

## Candidates Who Defied Norms, Overcame Poverty To Emerge Victorious

When there is a will there is a way. While this is a very common saying, but pretty effective if looked through the lenses of these three men and women who dared to go against the tide to emerge victorious in the recently concluded civic polls in Odisha and become corporators and councilors.

Cuttack, March 29: When there is a will there is a way. While this is a very common saying, but pretty effective if looked through the lenses of these three men and women who dared to go against the tide to emerge victorious in the recently concluded civic polls in Odisha and become corporators and councilors.

22-year-old Damayanti Majhi, who has won the corporator seat from Ward number 49 under the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC), had lost her father five years ago. Her mother is a daily wage and the family lives in a ramshackle shack at the Balisahi slum in Cuttack. No cooking gas, no electricity, no concrete roof above the head, Damayanti manifests

the poverty in Odisha.

However, her zeal for study and become an educated woman could not halt her march and she ended up joining the Ravenshaw University in the Silk City where she pursued her M.Com, but not before deciding to join politics by contending for the corporator position.

When media visited her 'home' following her win, she was seen cooking rice with a clay stove (Chulha). "I come from a very poor family and I would like to uplift the standard of living of youths living in my Ward," she said.

Damayanti has been projected as the primary contender for the position of Deputy Mayor of Cuttack.



Youngest Corporator Of Cuttack Damayanti Majhi may become Dy Mayor

Similarly, Sumitra Bastia from Ward number 29 in CMC has made it her mission to serve the poor. The bicycle which she rides every day to take the grievances of the poor in her Ward to the concerned government departments is her only prized possession.

When asked about the efforts she put in to win the election, Bastia said, "It is entirely possible to win election without money. You just need to have your goodwill with you. No money can fetch you the results if you do not have the blessings of the voters."

In Jagatsinghpur, a beetle shop owner, Debasish Swain not only won the councillor position in Ward number 17 but he defeated candidates of all three major political parties. His victory, despite money power and campaigns by Odisha Ministers and MLAs, has earned him a name in the region.

However, he will not stop selling paan in his shop, Swain said.

"I will serve people as per my capability. Nobody can stop me from discharging my duties. The blessings of people are with me," he said.

## 2 dead, four missing while bathing in River after Holi

One rescued person has been rushed to Jajpur hospital, said Ajay Jena of Jajpur town thana



Jajpur, March 19: After playing Holi, seven youths went for a bath in the river at Mangala Ghat near Badasuara village

However, they were swept away in the strong current of the river. Two youths died and four others went missing while bathing in the Kharasrota river in Odisha's Jajpur district after Holi celebration on Friday, officials said.

After playing Holi, seven youths went for a bath in the river at Mangala Ghat near Badasuara village this afternoon. However, they were swept away in the strong current of the river, said sarpanch Anupama Biswal.

Fire service personnel reached the spot and launched a rescue operation. One rescued person has been rushed to Jajpur hospital, said Ajay Jena of Jajpur town police.

## Rs 1.36 crore and 1.2 kg gold seized in Odisha from engineer in vigilance raids

Bhubaneswar, March 28: Odisha's vigilance department has registered its highest-ever cash seizure from a government official after it recovered Rs 1.36 crore from a rural works engineer during raids at his premises in Malkangiri and Cuttack that continued over four days.

Besides, 1.2 kg of gold was also recovered from Ashis Kumar Dash, a superintendent engineer with the rural works department. The previous highest seizure in the state was of Rs 41.77 lakh, from an engineer with the tribal development agency in

**The vigilance department registers its highest-ever cash seizure from a government official after raiding the premises of Ashis Kumar Dash, a rural works engineer. A total of Rs 4 crore was found in 12 bank accounts linked to him and insurance policies.**

November last year.

"On Monday searches were carried out at Das's apartment at Shantivan at Belgachia in Trisulia, Cuttack. During the search, Rs 1.15 crore in cash and 632 grams of gold including biscuits and coins were

recovered," a vigilance official said. The total recovery amounts to Rs 1, 36, 75,000.

"While further investigation is on, verification of his other bank accounts and two lockers is underway," the official said. Dash was detained by vigilance



The vigilance department has detected 12 bank accounts in the name of Dash's family members, relatives and associates.

sleuths on March 24 while allegedly handing over Rs 10.23 lakh to the manager of DCB Bank's Malkangiri branch.

The vigilance department has

detected 12 bank accounts in the name of Dash's family members, relatives and associates. The deposits in these accounts amount to Rs

2.25 crore. "Total deposits in bank accounts, fixed deposits, savings and insurance policies have been estimated at Rs 4 crore," the department said in a press release.

Shusant Kumar Biswal, deputy superintendent of the department's Malkangiri unit, said, "Dash collected a huge percentage from contractors in March for passing their bills and was planning either to deposit the money in banks or send it outside. He had been on our radar."



# Uniform Civil Code in U'khand Soon

The Uniform Civil Code essentially calls for the formulation of one law for India, applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc

New Delhi, March 24: Keeping his poll promise, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Thursday announced to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and said that the state cabinet has unanimously approved that a committee of experts will be formed at the earliest for the same. He said that Uttarakhand will be the first state to implement such a code but quickly added that "perhaps it is already in force in Goa".

Uniform Civil Code has been one of the main poll planks of the BJP over the past several decades. The saffron party has been a strong advocate of UCC and its MPs have previously listed Private Member's Bills, advocating for its implementation.

Addressing the media after his first state cabinet meeting, Dhami said the BJP-led state government will form a committee that will prepare "a draft of the UCC and our government will implement it". "We have decided to implement the Uniform Civil Code in the state. The state cabinet



Uttarakhand CM Dhami

unanimously approved that a committee (of experts) will be constituted at the earliest and it will be implemented in the state. We also expect other states to follow us," he said.

"We are a Himalayan state with a distinct cultural and religious heritage. We also share borders with two countries. So, a Uniform Civil Code is necessary. There is a provision for it in Article 44 of the Constitution. Even the Supreme Court has expressed its dissatisfaction in the past on its non-implementation,"

he added.

Dhami, who was sworn in as Uttarakhand's Chief Minister for the second consecutive term on Wednesday, had said that he will provide a transparent government and fulfill the BJP's all pre-poll commitments, including bringing a Uniform Civil Code in the state.

## 'A SIGNIFICANT STEP'

On February 12, Dhami had promised that the BJP if re-elected to power in Uttarakhand will constitute a

committee to prepare a draft Uniform Civil Code soon after its new government is sworn in. The panel will comprise legal experts, retired people, intellectuals, and other stakeholders, he had announced on the last day of campaigning for the 70 assembly seats in Uttarakhand that went to polls on February 14.

The ambit of the committee will cover issues related to marriage, divorce, landed property and succession, he had said in Hindi in a video statement, adding, "It will be a significant step towards fulfilling the dreams of India's Constitution makers and will realise the spirit of the Constitution. It will also be an effective step towards Article 44 of the Indian Constitution which presents the concept of equitable law for all citizens of society regardless of their religion."

From time to time, the Supreme Court, too, has underscored the need for a Uniform Civil Code and also expressed concern over no steps being taken in this

direction, he had said, adding that the BJP government in Uttarakhand will derive inspiration for the decision from Goa which has set an example before the country by implementing a common civil code. A common civil code will promote social amity and gender equality besides strengthening women empowerment, Dhami added.

For the unversed, in 2019, a Supreme Court bench had expressed disappointment over the lack of UCC, saying, "Whereas the founders of the Constitution in Article 44 in Part IV dealing with the Directive Principles of State Policy had hoped and expected that the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territories of India, till date no action has been taken in this regard."

## WHAT IS UNIFORM CIVIL CODE?

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) essentially calls for the formulation of one law for India, applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce,

inheritance, adoption etc. It comes under Article 44 of the Constitution, which lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.

Currently, different laws regulate these aspects in India for adherents of different religions, for example, Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Indian Christian Marriages Act, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act. However, Muslim personal laws are not codified and are based on their religious texts.

## ABOUT GOA CIVIL CODE

Goa has been following the Portuguese Civil Code, 1867 which is also called Uniform Civil Code. Post its liberation from the Portuguese rule, the code is survived by virtue of Section 5(1) of the Goa, Daman and Diu Administration Act, 1962. Its continuance amounts to the non-enforcement of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and Hindu Succession Act, 1956 or Indian Succession Act, 1925 or Shariat (Application) Act, 1937.

# PM Modi Lauds Swachhagrahi Rahul Maharana's Crusade Against Plastic

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday spoke about the importance of cleanliness as a part of our daily lives. While highlighting the efforts of environmental activists across India, Modi praised Rahul Maharana of Puri, whose crusade against plastics has inspired many.

Modi was addressing the Nation through Mann Ki Baat, on the 87th edition of the radio programme on Sunday. Modi said, Swachhagrahi Rahul Maharana of Puri goes to the



pilgrimage sites in Puri early in the morning every Sunday,

and clears the plastic garbage there.

"He has cleaned hundreds of kilos of plastic garbage and

dirt so far," the PM added. "Health is directly related to cleanliness. In 'Mann Ki Baat', we always mention the efforts of the proponents of cleanliness. One such Swachhagrahi is Chandrakishore Patil ji. He lives in Nashik, Maharashtra. Chandrakishore ji's resolve regarding cleanliness is very heartfelt," said Modi.

He stands by the Godavari river, and constantly encourages people not to throw garbage in the river. If he sees someone doing this, he immediately stops them.

Chandrakishore invests a lot of his time in this endeavour. "By evening, he has a pile of such things, which people have brought to throw into the river. This effort of Chandrakishore ji also raises awareness and is also inspiring."

"Be it Rahul of Puri or Chandrakishore of Nashik, they teach us a lot. As citizens, we must carry out our duties, whether it is cleanliness, nutrition or vaccination... all these efforts also help us in staying healthy," the PM said.



# The First Live Sighting of "Rough toothed dolphins" in Indian Water

Submitted by: Department of Environment & Forest, Lakshadweep, India



Marine Mammals Research Team, Department of Environment & Forest, Lakshadweep



The Marine Mammals Research team working under the Department of Environment & Forest, Lakshadweep has reported the first every live sightings of Rough-toothed dolphins in Indian waters. Earlier reports of the species are only three

(www.marinemammals.in) and are stranding events on the east coast of India. Dr. Ahmed Amirsha, Senior Project Officer and his 9 members team (Sinan Yafus, Afsal, Jaseem, Salih, Jowhar, Shafi, Wasih, Saifudheen and Muhammed Koya) were

involved to conducting a dedicated line transect survey during February to March 2022 around Lakshadweep Archipelago and they reported the first live sighting records of Rough-toothed dolphins in Indian waters.

During their diversity and distribution monitoring surveys the marine mammal research team first sighted the species on 12/2/2022 and the new species identified with the help of Dr. Dipani Sutaria (Consultant CMM). The observers noticed the lack of a crease between the head and the beak, that is usually present in all small sized dolphins, but the animals in this particular group lacked this crease, one of the most identifiable characters of the species. Though it is the ridges on their teeth that gives them their common name. The species has been sighted twice. Once at Cheriyaapani on 12/02/2022 (group size= 35) and Kavaratti on 07/03/2022 (group size=10). The groups were socially tight with the presence of adults, sub adults and calves. They have been seen to associate with other cetacean species, including

short-finned pilot whales, bottlenose dolphins, Pantropical spotted dolphins, and spinner dolphins. They are known to eat squid and different types of fish based on which they are distributed in the worlds oceans...

Rough toothed dolphins are found in tropical and warmer temperate waters all over the world but at the same time are rare and data deficient. They can grow up to 8.5ft in length and have gray bodies with white lips and throat and a speckled belly. When they are observed, they are usually seen in small tight knit groups of around 20 animals or less. Rough-toothed dolphins can live for up to 36 or so years. Sexual maturity occurs at 10 to 14 years of age.

The worldwide population of rough-toothed dolphins is unknown. Given the lack of data population estimates, prey preference, social structure and habitat use, for the species, dedicated surveys in hotspots around oceanic island systems such as Lakshadweep is recommended.

L a k s h a d w e e p Administration implemented a



Marine Mammals research programme with the financial support of MoEF,CC, NewDelhi. The Department of Environment & Forest, Research and Development Division carried out the research activities for the last three years. Shri. C.N Abdul

Raheem (Range Forest Officer & Head, R&D) and Kum. Sitara Jasmin, (OIC, R&D) leading the Research and Development Division. Marine Mammals Research Team, Department of Environment & Forest, Lakshadweep



## Muslim woman's historic win in Odisha Civic polls

Bhadrak, March 27: The 31-year-old Gulmaki Dalawzi Habib, an independent candidate, won the election to chairperson of Bhadrak Municipality by defeating nearest rival Samita Mishra, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) candidate, by 3,256 votes.

The recently concluded civic body polls was a turning point for minority community in Odisha's poll history with voters directly electing a woman from the Muslim community as chairperson of any urban local body for the first time.

The 31-year-old Gulmaki Dalawzi Habib, an independent candidate, won the election to chairperson of Bhadrak Municipality by defeating nearest rival Samita Mishra, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) candidate, by

3,256 votes.

Habib, who is a Business Administration graduate and a professional data entry operator, attributes her victory to people's trust and the mutual goal of Bhadrak's development. She claims to be a political novice but comes from a family with a political pedigree. Her husband, Sheikh Jahid Habib, is the BJD's district vice president.

There had been a demand for fielding a person from the minority community as candidate for civic body chairperson in Bhadrak where a Muslim community has a sizeable population. As the post was reserved for women, Ms. Habib became the unanimous choice. However, she had to face the ire of the ruling BJD.

### Communal tensions

Initially it was believed that



it would not be smooth sailing for Ms. Habib as Bhadrak has a history of communal tensions.

"During my campaign, I had

not come across any reservation in minds of voters towards Muslim woman candidate. People treated me like their

daughter irrespective of the community they belong to," said Ms. Habib who would soon be sworn as chairperson of Bhadrak Municipal Corporation.

Though Muslim women had won direct elections for post of councillors or wardmembers, this is for the first time; a muslim woman was first choice of voters for leading a town.

"In Odisha's poll history, not a single woman has been elected as MLA. Even Muslim communities are very reluctant to send woman members to fight elections. After the Odisha government reserved seats for women in three-tier panchayati raj institutions and civic bodies, Muslim women are coming forward to fight elections," said Mohammed Akbar Ali, who was chairperson of Kendrapara

Municipality for six years from 1984 to 1990.

Muslim community constitutes less than 3% of Odisha's population. There have been very few representation of minority community in the State's politics, though members of Muslim community had gone on to become Cabinet Ministers in the State.

Similarly, journalist-turned-politician Sulochana Das became the first woman Mayor of Bhubaneswar. Prior to her election as first citizen of Bhubaneswar, she was Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities.

"I want to give further push to development initiative taken in Bhubaneswar. People would surely take pride for being citizen of the capital city," said Ms. Das after her victory.





# Bhuvan Shome: When Mrinal Sen started Indian cinema's new wave with Amitabh Bachchan, paid him just Rs 300



Mrinal Sen's Bhuvan Shome was the film that started the era of the Indian new wave in cinema. It is interesting to note that this was also the first paying gig of Amitabh Bachchan. Mrinal Sen's Bhuvan Shome won three National Film Awards in 1969.

When acclaimed filmmaker Mrinal Sen made Bhuvan Shome as his first Hindi film, he wasn't aware that this film would get him the credit of starting the New Wave of Indian cinema. And when the film did exceptionally well with

niche audiences, Sen was in for a shock. The 1969 film is often cited as the film that made 'art cinema' palatable for the audience as it had all the elements that were used in the 'mainstream films', yet its presentation was refined, classic, and the kind that left a lasting impression. The 1969 film starred Utpal Dutt as the titular character who can be easily described as a strict bureaucrat who lives a solitary life until one day, he decides to step out of his comfort zone and realises that life

is best lived with people. When he meets Suhasini Mulay's Gauri, his softer side emerges, something that he hasn't experienced in years.

The 90-minutes of Bhuvan Shome are not dictated by a strict story but are rather a collection of experiences that introduce the audience to some 'new wave' elements that were not seen by the Indian audience until then. The freeze frames where Utpal's inner monologue emerges- a narrator who is borderline sarcastic, and animation sequences that establish that the film is a surrealistic take on the theme of loneliness.

## Utpal Dutt in Bhuvan Shome.

It is interesting to note that this was the first film gig for Amitabh Bachchan, who is credited without his surname in the opening credits. In his book, Always Being Born - A Memoir, Sen mentioned that he had to insist that Bachchan take a cheque for the film and that cheque was just for Rs 300. Bachchan, who eventually became a poster boy for everything that mainstream

cinema stood for, made his first income from the movies in a rather non-commercial film.

The themes of Bhuvan Shome have been interpreted in various ways in the decades since it came out. Many see the film as a lonely man's journey to finding company, but there has been much conversation about the film having erotic undertones. When Shome meets Gauri, he is surprised at her welcoming nature. The film's subtext and some of the close-ups of the two characters hint at the sexual undertones as Shome lets his guard and accepts her company on his day-long adventure of trying to hunt birds. Shome's hunt for trying to find a flock of birds subtly hints towards his inner desire to be in a society where he is surrounded by people. Something, that he has distanced himself from. While he did so willingly, he is starting to question his decision after meeting Gauri.

Satyajit Ray, who was often seen as Sen's competitor, wrote a long essay regarding the film and described it as - 'Big Bad Bureaucrat Reformed by Rustic Belle'. Sen, in his memoir, wrote in response,

"My business, to write in plain and simple language, was not to reform the bureaucrat because he belonged to an incorrigible tribe. Bhuvan Shome, as I saw him on the screen, was an arrogant man, lonely and sad, who finally came to a tragic realisation, burlesque and tragic nonsense acting as facade."

## Bhuvan Shome marked the debut of Suhasini Mulay

One of the most arresting sequences of the film comes when Gauri is showing Bhuvan around a 'purani haveli' and recalls the stories of rajas and maharajas who lived there. She sits in a corner and narrates the story of rani who had a 'jhula' on the same spot. She puts her arms up as if she is sitting on a swing and KK Mahajan (the director of photography), zooms in and out to give the impression of a swing in motion. Mahajan utilises the camera in a way that highlights the loneliness that has engulfed Shome and slowly gives space to others who are now welcomed in his life.

Bhuvan Shome was made on a budget of just Rs 2 lakh and was

one of the first films to be financed by Film Finance Corporation (now known as NFDC), but it gained an audience that Sen had not expected. In his memoir, Sen narrated an incident where he was once travelling with a chatty cab driver in Mumbai, and to shut him up, he asked if the man had seen Bhuvan Shome. Expecting that he must have not, Sen thought that the conversation would end but to his surprise, the taxi driver asked, 'The one with the birds?' and described it as a 'class film'. Upon learning Sen's identity, the taxi driver did not say another word for the rest of the ride and refused to take the fare.

Bhuvan Shome won three National Film Awards - Best Feature Film, Best Director and Best Actor. Sen was a pioneer in Indian cinema but amongst all his great works Bhuvan Shome stands tall for being the film that started the new wave in India in a way that was accepted by the audience and gave them something to dissect even years after the film's release.

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