



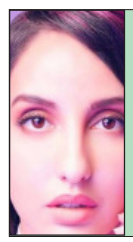
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'Govt has no business to be in business': PM Modi bats for privatisation



New Delhi, Feb 24: Reiterating his government's stance on privatisation, the Prime Minister said, "We have made it clear in the new public sector enterprise policy that government will have limited role in only four strategic sectors and all other public sector units can be privatised." Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday announced in a webinar on Privatisation and Asset Monetisation that the government will push ahead with plans to "monetise" and "modernise" the assets of the country. The Prime Minister said that

public sector enterprises which do not occupy a position of strategic importance should not be kept functional. The only responsibility of the government, he said, is to support the country's enterprises and businesses. "I can understand the need of any public sector enterprise if it is fulfilling the needs of any sector and of any strategic importance. It is the responsibility of the government to supply support country's enterprise and business but there is no need for the government to be in business," said PM Modi. Reiterating his government's stance on

privatisation, the Prime Minister said, "We have made it clear in the new public sector enterprise policy that government will have limited role in only four strategic sectors and all other public sector units can be privatised." PM Modi said in the seminar that most public sector enterprises incur losses and that burdens the economy, adding that there is no need to keep these enterprises functional just because they were started as someone's "pet projects". The Prime Minister insisted that the push behind privatisation would lead

to less governmental interference in people's lives, reinforcing his previous vision of "minimum government, maximum governance". "We want to stop unnecessary governmental interference in people's private lives. There should not be a lack of governance or an effect of governance in people's lives" the PM told the attendants at the webinar. The Prime Minister, while outlining the government's policy of privatisation, said that 100 government owned under-utilised assets have been earmarked for the task. "There are many government-owned under-utilised and unutilised assets. The government plans to monetise 100 government-owned assets. There is ₹2.5 trillion investment opportunity in these 100 assets which are up for monetisation. When government monetizes, that space is filled by the private sector of the country. The private sector

brings investment and best global practices with them," PM Modi said. The Prime Minister assured that the money from the monetisation of assets will be put towards welfare policies for the development of the country. "We will increase efficiency of our economy. The money will be used for Jan Kalyan Yojana. The money from asset monetisation and privatisation makes poor people's home, roads in rural villages, opens schools, and brings clean water for the poor. Even after so many years of freedom we have such lacks in our country," he said at the webinar. The event was attended by the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), investors from North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia Pacific, and other top officials from government departments, including finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

CM Launches Rural Development's Networking System

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today launched the Multi-Protocol Label Switching Virtual Private Networking (RD-MPLS VPN) System for the Rural Development Department on

over the Rural Development Department's efforts to strengthen the 5T initiative of the State Government to bring about transformative changes by introducing technology intensive applications. This network

thus bring in more efficiency and transparency in the management of the entire work cycle. He expressed confidence that with the help of these technologies, the department will be able to closely monitor



virtual platform. Speaking on the occasion after launching the system, the Chief Minister said this networking system will provide internal connectivity to the offices of the department at local level, where internet connectivity is inadequate. The Rural Development Department, which has the mandate for rural infrastructure development, is connecting its 247 offices through its own networking system called RD MPLS Network. Through this network, all offices starting from the Lokseva Bhawan to Sub-Divisions will be connected in one network with uninterrupted internet facility. The Chief Minister expressed happiness

will facilitate the use of online web-based applications to be used at field levels and further the 5T initiative in bringing transparency, effective monitoring and grievance redressal. The Chief Minister further said that the Rural Development Department is already implementing web-based applications for an array of services including tendering, maintenance management, works and accounts management, financial management, grievance redressal and several other services. Lauding the endeavour of the department for making end-to-end automation in the whole tendering process, he said that this will avoid human interface and

the progress of the projects. It may be mentioned here that the Rural Development Department has developed infrastructure facilities with over 1 lakh km of rural roads, facilities on 60 lakh square metres of area, 1,400 completed bridges and 600 bridges under construction. The system will help closely monitor the progress and maintenance of these infrastructure. Among others, Rural Development Minister Sushant Singh, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, Secretary to Chief Minister VK Pandian, Development Commissioner PK Jena and senior officials were present in the programme.

Opposition Lashes Out At Odisha Govt Over Border Dispute

Bhubaneswar: The Opposition parties on Wednesday cornered the Odisha government over the border dispute issue with Andhra Pradesh and other states. Participating in an adjournment motion over the border dispute issue, leader of opposition Pradipta Kumar Naik said Odisha has border disputes with four states over 96 villages. "We don't see any action by the state government to resolve the issue. In Kotia panchayat, the dispute is over 21 villages and Andhra Pradesh conducted panchayat polls

there," said Naik. Informing that there are no basic facilities including road and drinking water, the leader of opposition said the villagers are alienating Odisha as the state government has neglected them. On the other hand, the Andhra Pradesh government is providing better facilities to them, he added. Opposition chief whip Mohan Charan Majhi said due to negligence and lack of foresight by the state government, neighbouring states are intruding into the territory of Odisha. Participating in the motion, Congress



MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati said the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is only concerned about the party. "Under BJD rule, land and water are not safe. Why did the state government

not deploy police and direct that the villagers can't vote when Andhra Pradesh conducted polls in Kotia? An all-party meeting should be called to discuss the issue," said Bahinipati.

Replying to the adjournment motion, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi said Odisha is facing border disputes with four states in seven districts.

Odisha Traders' Body Seeks PM Intervention For Simpler Tax Rules

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Traders in Odisha sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to simplify Goods and Services Tax (GST). In a letter to the Prime Minister, Odisha Byabasyee Mahasangha's (Federation of All Odisha Traders Association) Secretary General Sudhakar Panda requested him to consider withdrawal of two notifications is-

sued by the Centre on December 22, 2020 and January 1, 2021 regarding the Central Tax. Panda further stated due to Covid, the traders in the country have been affected. At this juncture, the Centre's two notifications issued on December 22, 2020 and January 1, 2021 on the tax surprised the traders. "If these rules are not withdrawn the entire trade cycle will

fail and will affect tax collection adversely. Therefore, to encourage the ease of doing business we request to withdraw the rules at the earliest," the letter read. If compliance are made easy and trade friendly, the traders' body assured that tax base as well as tax collection will increase many folds under the leadership of the Confederation of All India Traders



(CAIT). The State trader's body proposed to form a committee consisting of departmental personnel, ministers, tax experts under the chair-

manship of the Finance Minister to discuss the Act and rules and changes in the help the traders to do business without hampering the revenue collection.

'Bharat Bandh' On February 26

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Shops and business establishments across the country will remain closed a day after tomorrow due to a nationwide strike call, causing discomfort for the people. Life is likely to be paralysed on February 26 as a 'Bharat Bandh' will be observed by traders and transporters across the States and Union Territories. Meanwhile, the Odisha Byabasyee Mahasangha (Federation of All Odisha Traders Association) extended its support to the bandh call. As many as 20 lakh business establishments in the State will remain closed due to the strike.



- Here're key points about the nationwide strike:
- Demanding a review of the provisions of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has called for a 'Bharat Bandh'
 - The All India Transporters' Welfare Association (AITWA) also supports the bandh call given by CAIT
 - The transporters' association has been demanding abolition of the new E-Way Bill
 - The transporters also want removal of norms to track vehicles by using FastTag connectivity to E-Invoice
 - Nearly 40,000 trade associations, representing eight crore traders of the country, have extended support to the 'Bharat Bandh' call given by CAIT
 - Above all, the traders' and transporters' associations want uniformity of diesel prices across the country.

Disengagement of India, China armies win-win situation for both sides: Army chief

New Delhi, Feb 24: The disengagement of armies of India and China from north and south banks of Pangong Tso is a “very good end result” and a win-win situation for both the sides, Army Chief Gen M M Naravane said on Wednesday, stressing that there are strategies in place to address other pending issues in eastern Ladakh. He said there were no signs of an “overt collusion” between China and Pakistan during the Ladakh standoff but India also caters to a long term strategy for not a two, but a two-and-half front war. With the half front, he was referring to the internal security. He said right from the beginning of the standoff, all sides on the Indian side



worked together. Be it at the political level, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to their Chinese counterparts, he said. “We were all in it together. We had our plan chalked out which we had discussed on what should be the way forward. Whatever has panned out, has hap-

pened as a result of that. What we have achieved so far is very good,” Naravane said at a webinar organised by Vivekananda International Foundation. The advice which was given by National Security Adviser also came in extremely handy and his insight into strategic level affairs definitely helped us chalking out

the response, the Army chief said. “As a result of this whole approach, this disengagement has taken place. I think it is a very good end result. It is a win-win situation. For any agreement to last, both sides should feel that they have achieved something. I think a good outcome that has resulted out of the 10 rounds of talks

which have taken place so far,” he said. Last week, armies of the two countries concluded withdrawal of troops and weapons from north and south banks of Pangong Tso in the high-altitude region. Naravane said there are some issues which remain in the area of Depsang, in the area of eastern Ladakh and in other areas along northern border. “...But we have our strategies in place for that. Do we have anything to negotiate in future? Yes, definitely we have. But I would not, of course, for obvious reasons, what those strategies would be to further and progress our negotiations and come out with a favourable outcome.”

‘Insulting Indians favourite pastime’ of Rahul Gandhi, says Javadekar, calls him ‘superficial’

New Delhi, Feb 24: Addressing a public gathering in Thiruvananthapuram, Rahul said, “For the first 15 years, I was an MP in the north, I had got used to a different type of politics. For me, coming to Kerala was very refreshing as suddenly I found that people are interested in issues, and not just superficially,

of responsibility shown by the former chief of a national party. “Insulting Indians is a favourite pastime of Rahul Gandhi. Indians are not superficial you are Mr Rahul Gandhi,” Javadekar tweeted. Later during a post-Cabinet media briefing, the information and broadcasting minister said the BJP leaders

years, I was an MP in the north. I had got used to a different type of politics. For me, coming to Kerala was very refreshing as suddenly I found that people are interested in issues and not just superficially but going into detail in issues.” The comments triggered sharp reactions from several BJP lead-



Govt ready to talk with farmers on 3 laws after unions’ response on its offer: Tomar



New Delhi, Feb 24: The government is ready to resume talks with protesting farmers if they respond to its offer to put the three contentious farm laws on hold for one-and-a-half year and work out the difference during that time through a joint committee, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said Wednesday. The government and unions representing farmers, who have been camping at Delhi’s border for

about three months in protest against the three laws that they see will end state procurement of crops at MSP, have held 11 rounds of talks, the last being on January 22. Talks broke after widespread violence during a tractor rally by protesting farmers on January 26. Speaking on the sidelines of an event here, Tomar said the government is committed towards the interest of farmers and agriculture, and under

the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is making efforts to double farmers’ income and strengthen the Indian agriculture sector. The minister was replying to a query on Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait threatening to march to the Parliament on 40 lakh tractors if laws are not repealed. Whether the government is making any effort to resume talks with unions, Tomar said, “Bharat sarkar kisano se puri samvedana ke saath charcha karti rahi hai. Aaj bhi jab unka koi mat aayega, toh Bharat sarkar hamesha kisano ke saath charcha karne ko taiyaar hai (The government has been holding discussions with farmers sympathetically. Even today, whenever their response comes, the gov-

ernment is always ready to hold talks).” Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, is protesting at Delhi borders for around three months, seeking repeal of three new laws and a legal guarantee of the MSP. In the 11th round of talks held on January 22, the government’s negotiations with 41 farmer groups hit a roadblock as the unions squarely rejected the Centre’s proposal to put three contentious laws on hold and form joint committee to find solutions. During the 10th round of talks held on January 20, the Centre had offered to suspend the laws for 1-1.5 years and form a joint committee to find solutions, in return for protesting farmers going back to their respective homes from Delhi bor-

ders. Farmer groups have alleged that these laws will end the mandi and MSP procurement systems and leave the farmers at the mercy of big corporates, even as the government has rejected these apprehensions as misplaced. On January 11, the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the three laws till further orders and appointed a four-member panel to resolve the impasse. Bhartiya Kisan Union President Bhopinder Singh Mann had recused himself from the committee appointed by the apex court. Shetkari Sanghatana (Maharashtra) President Anil Ghanwat and agriculture economists Pramod Kumar Joshi and Ashok Gulati, the other three members on the panel, have started the consultation process with stakeholders.

but going into detail.” Javadekar also said the Congress leader has been severely admonished on social media while his cabinet colleague Ravi Shankar Prasad asserted that the remarks have raised questions over the level of responsibility shown by the former chief of a national party. Amid a political slugfest over Rahul Gandhi’s “north-south” comment, Union minister Prakash Javadekar on Wednesday called the opposition leader “superficial” and said “insulting Indians” was Gandhi’s “favourite pastime”. Javadekar also said the Congress leader has been severely admonished on social media while his cabinet colleague Ravi Shankar Prasad asserted that the remarks have raised questions over the level

have already reacted to that and “social media pe poori dhulai hui hai” (he has been severely admonished on social media too). Prasad said, “I do not take political questions generally (during the post-Cabinet briefing), but this is one question on which I want to speak... Gandhi talks about fresh air when he goes to north-east and when he is in South India, he says the atmosphere in Kerala is different from the north”. “Yours is a national party and you are differentiating the country’s atmosphere. This certainly raises a question about the level of your responsibility (as a national party leader),” the minister added. Addressing a public gathering in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday, Gandhi had said, “For the first 15

ers, including some senior ministers, who immediately accused the Congress of being an “opportunist” and alleged that Gandhi belittled North Indians, despite him and his family members winning several elections from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh in the past. Reacting to the attack from BJP leaders, the Congress on Wednesday said Gandhi had given a clarion call to the people to question the government on real issues and the north-south divide was a “toolkit” being sold by the BJP to the public. Congress’ chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that the BJP was raising “superficial” issues on a daily basis to divert the country’s attention from the people’s issues.

Cabinet approves President’s Rule in Puducherry



New Delhi, Feb 24: Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters that the decision was taken as no party claimed to form a government in Puducherry following the resignation of the chief minister V Narayanasamy. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a proposal to impose President’s Rule in Puducherry, days after a Congress-led government in the union

territory lost power during a vote of confidence. Announcing the Cabinet decision, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters that the decision was taken as no party claimed to form a government in Puducherry following the resignation of the chief minister there. Subsequently, the Lieutenant General had recommended President’s Rule in Puducherry and the Union Cabinet has

approved the same, the minister said. After the President’s assent, the assembly will get resolved, Javadekar said, while adding that further necessary steps for administrative work in Puducherry would be taken soon. He also noted that the model code of conduct was expected to come into effect soon after the Election Commission announces the dates for elections there, along with four states.

How AAP, after Punjab, Delhi and now Gujarat, is weighing its options in UP

New Delhi, Feb 24: The result in the Gujarat civic body polls has come at the right time for AAP, as it gets ready to contest in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat in the next two years. Opening its account in the Gujarat civic body polls has proved to be a shot in the arm for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is trying to extend its footprint to other states. AAP won 27 of the 120 seats in the Surat Municipal Corporation, dislodging the Congress as the main opposition. In a release, AAP quoted party chief Arvind Kejriwal as saying that the people of Gujarat “have voted for politics of work as they were fed up by the politics of BJP and Congress. The people of Gujarat wanted an alternative and AAP has emerged as the key alternative to the present parties. Now the upcoming

assembly election will be only between Aam Aadmi Party and BJP”. Expressing his happiness at the party “breaching Modi’s citadel”, senior Aam Aadmi Party leader and chief spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said the citizens of Gujarat are looking for an alternative to the BJP, and AAP has emerged as their first choice. Soon after the results were declared, AAP tweeted from its official handle: “AAP National Convenor Shri @ArvindKejriwal will visit Gujarat on 26th Feb, 2021. He will thank the people of Gujarat for believing in AAP’s Model of Development, in a grand Road Show.” The result in the Gujarat civic body polls has come at the right time for AAP, as it gets ready to contest in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat in the next two years. The Kejriwal-led party has

also tasted success in other unfamiliar territories recently — it won a panchayat election in Goa and an AAP member won the District Development Council (DDC) polls in the Doda district of Jammu

and Kashmir. There were not just one or two mistakes, but several blunders that the AAP committed. I concede and acknowledge those. But we have become wiser. We have gained experience

shaan of Punjab, of whom every person of the state will feel proud.” In Punjab and in Uttar Pradesh, AAP is looking to focus on the issue of farmers’ agitation. The party has already said that it would hold a ‘Kisan



and learned from our blunders,” AAP’s Punjab in-charge Raghav Chadha recently told. He added, “The AAP will give face and candidate for the next CM of Punjab. That person will be from the 3 crore population of Punjab. That person will be considered to be the aan, baan, and

and learned from our blunders,” AAP’s Punjab in-charge Raghav Chadha recently told. He added, “The AAP will give face and candidate for the next CM of Punjab. That person will be from the 3 crore population of Punjab. That person will be considered to be the aan, baan, and

Mahasammelan’ in Punjab’s Moga district on March 21. Kejriwal is expected to attend the event. The recent farmers’ protests have exposed discontent against the BJP in parts of Uttar Pradesh. BKU leader Naresh Tikait has suggested a social boycott of the BJP in the state.

MLA arrested in job scam gets bail, but will remain in jail

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Despite the bail, Pradeep Panigrahy will not be released from prison as three other cases of fraud have been filed by the people of Ganjam district. The Orissa High Court on Wednesday granted conditional bail to former BJD leader and Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahy who has been in jail since December last year on charges of defrauding youths of Ganjam district by promising them jobs in Tata Motors. Panigrahi was granted bail with the condition of furnishing bail bonds of ₹5 lakh



each with two sureties and ₹24 lakh cash security. Panigrahy has been in jail since December 3 after the Odisha CID arrested him on in connection with a case registered with the Cyber police station under sections

419, 420, 467, 468, 469, 471, 120-B of the IPC and Section 66C, 66D of IT Act. The CID alleged that Panigrahy had collected money from people on behalf of Akash Pathak, son of suspended IFS officer Abhay Pathak, with the

false promise of providing jobs in Tata Motors. However, the legislator will not be released from prison as three cases of fraud have been filed by people of Ganjam district at Golanthara police station. In December, the

ruling BJD had sacked the 56-year-old Panigrahi from the party on charges of anti-people activities. Earlier this month, the Orissa High Court had quashed an order of the Lokayukta for a probe by the state vigilance department against Panigrahy noting that the complainant and investigating agency in a quasi-judicial process cannot be the same. Last December, the Lokayukta had issued the order on a complaint filed by Vigilance department on how Panigrahy amassed assets disproportionate to his known source of income.

DCPU Employees Demand to Regularise their Service

Khordha, Feb 24: District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) employees demand to regularise their service and facilities given to him as a government employee. In this regards they have submitted a memorandum address to Chief Minister Of Odisha through Collector

Khordha. In the memorandum mentioned that they have work in the year -2013 to till today under the government of Odisha with very low salary. In different forum they have demanded to Regularised their service and provide other facilities. But the government of Odisha not respond

their demand. Further they argued that state of Bihar, Rajasthan, Kerala, Manipur state government Regularised the service of DCPU Employees of their state. The DCPU Employees requested the CM of Odisha to kindly consider their legitimate claim's.



Dist. Will face severe water crisis in near future as told by Environmentalist Jagannath Bastia

(A.O. Bureau)
Puri, Feb 24: Puri Dist. Will face severe water crisis in near future as told by Environmentalist Jagannath Bastia for this reason the village people should be aware of the situation and un-

der ground water should be recharge by digging ponds, in the village the organization Pani arrange a seminar on water sources at youth hostel the coordinator Mrs Rajkishor Swami gate the detail

report of how the people of several villages drinking yellow, salted, floride and iron water so the Administration should look after the problem in this seminar so many eminent person were present.



New Office Bearers Elected For CII Odisha State Council 2021-22

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Mr Manish Kharbanda, Advisor (Leagal, Corp. Affairs, CSR & Sustainability) was elected as the new Chairman, CII Odisha State Council. His name was announced at the first meeting of the re-constituted Odisha State Council held in Puri on 23 February 2020. Mr Sridhar Patra, Chairman and Managing Director, National Aluminium Company Ltd has been elected as the Vice Chairman, CII Odisha State Council for the year 2021-22. Mr Manish Kharbanda is a seasoned professional with several years of work experience in some of the best companies in Corporate In-



dia. At present, Mr Khrabanda is working for Jindal Steel and Power as Group Advisor, Corporate Affairs, Legal & Sustainability. Prior to this assignment, he successfully led the Mines and Minerals Business of JSPL as Executive Director - Group Head (Raw Material Sourcing) & Head of Odisha Affair. As Executive Director - Global Ventures, Mr Manish Khrabanda was man-

aging the complete global business portfolio - identifying and canvassing organic and inorganic growth opportunities & managing operations. Manish is an alumnus of Harvard Business School having added an Advanced Management degree to his rich academics. To his credit, Manish is an MBA from ICAFI specializing in Finance & HR. His academic repertoire also includes an Advanced Di-

ploma in Finance (CFA charter) and Bachelors of Law from the University of Lucknow. His deep knowledge of business, impeccable academics combined with passion, dedication and thought leadership has led to his meteoric growth in organizations. Mr Sridhar Patra is known for his "Simple Living-High Thinking Attitude. He has carved a niche for himself and has earned the tag of re-

sult-driven and Team oriented leader. Prior to assuming the charge as CMD, Mr Patra was Director, Finance of NALCO. He has over 3 decades of experience on handling finance and accounts functions of PSUs. His expertise and exposure in corporate accounts, budgetary control, direct and indirect tax management, strategic financial and business planning. Financial evaluation of contracts, cost excellence and treasury function are assets any organisation or company will strive and vouch for. Mr Patra's professionalism to all stakeholders, 'hands on approach' style and sharp business acumen has endeared him to one and all.

Odisha Gears Up To Deal With Heat Wave; SRC Issues Guidelines For Districts

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: As the mercury rose in Odisha with nine places recording day temperature above 35 degrees Celsius today and summer is fast approaching, Special Relief Commissioner, Pradeep Jena released guidelines for the Districts. In a letter to the District Collectors, the Special Relief Commissioners directed them to take advance steps to identify the water scarcity pockets and prepare action plan for ensuring supply of water for drinking and others uses through tankers to those areas. The district administration were also directed to respond to reports of water scarcity to immediately. In case schools and educational institutions remain open, extra care has to be taken to ensure

availability of drinking water in all school and colleges. Wherever required tube wells inside the school campus may be repaired to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply. Sufficient ORS are also to be kept in schools, colleges and provided to students and staff requiring the same. Outdoor activities have to be restricted so as the students not be exposed to heat wave condition, the guideline added. Anganwadi centres will remain open in morning hours only. Availability of potable water in all AWCs must be checked and ensured, the SRC asked the district administrations. All public transport vehicles must carry sufficient potable water and ORS packets to be provided to passengers and staff requiring the



same. During severe heat wave condition, timings of non-air conditioned public transport services may have to be rescheduled avoiding their plying during peak hours of heat wave. The timing for engagement of labourers and workmen at worksites may be rescheduled. No work should be executed in peak hours during heat wave period. In case of

reports regarding death of a person due to sunstroke either at work place or any other area are received, the Collector should arrange to conduct immediate joint enquiry of the local case by the local revenue office like Tahsildar or Additional Tahsildar or any other Revenue officer in urban areas and the local Medical Officer. The joint enquiry report with counter-

signature of Collector should reach the SRC office within 48 hours of the reported death, the guideline stated. The control rooms at the State level and the district level shall function round the clock during the period of heat wave. Today Bhubaneswar was the hottest place in the State with the maximum temperature at 38 degrees Celsius.

Online Classes For 1st Year Students Of Undergraduate Courses To Begin Soon

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The Odisha government today directed the Vice Chancellors of State universities and Principals of Degree Colleges to start online classes for first year students who took admission into undergraduate courses. Principal Secretary of Higher Education Department, Saswat Mishra in a letter asked the Vice Chancellors and Principals

to conduct undergraduate first year classes in online mode from March 1, 2021. "As Covid-19 situation has not come under total control, it is not possible to commence physical classes for Undergraduate first year students who have taken admission recently. If teaching for these students is not started immediately, they will heavily lose on the academic front," the letter read.

Worth mentioning, physical classroom teaching for students of final year undergraduate and post graduate courses started from January 11, 2021. Also, PG first year and UG pre-final year courses, i.e. second year in case of three-year undergraduate courses and third year in case of four-year undergraduate courses, started attending physical classes from February 10, 2021.



Nine Places In Odisha Record Day Temp Above 35 Degrees Celsius



Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The mercury rose further in Odisha today as nine places in the State recorded day temperature above 35 Degrees Celsius. Bhubaneswar, the Odisha Capital recorded the maximum

temperature at 38 Degrees Celsius and was the hottest place in the State today. As per the data provided by the Regional Meteorological Centre, Baripada and Cuttack registered 36.8 and 36.6 Degrees Cel-

sus, respectively. Other places which recorded day temperature above 35 Degrees Celsius are: Nayagarh 36.5, Balangir 36.4, Angul 35.7, Talcher 35.5, Bhawanipatna 35.5, Sambalpur 35.3.

EDITORIAL

Helping hand

Declaring those still missing after the Chamoli tragedy 'presumed dead' is aimed at helping their families. Nearly a fortnight after tragedy struck in the form of a glacier breach at Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, the State Government has issued a notification to declare 136 people, who are still missing after the February 7 flash flood, "presumed dead". Of the 204 people originally reported missing when the flood hit two hydropower projects near the Naina Devi National Park, search and rescue workers have recovered the rest of the bodies or fragmented body parts. This move by the Government, which has begun the process of issuing death certificates for those missing, would basically make it faster and easier for the bereaved families to receive compensation early. Treating the Chamoli incident as an "exception", the Government decided to invoke provisions of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. Usually, people who go missing in a disaster or natural calamity are declared dead if they remain untraced for seven years. But this law allows the Government to declare missing persons as dead before the stipulated seven-year-period. The death certificates for those missing would be made under three categories: One, locals belonging to Chamoli district; two, those belonging to other districts of the State; and three, tourists or people from other States. While the Government's decision is laudatory in the sense that it would help alleviate some degree of pain being felt by those families who are in the throes of uncertainty and suspense after their kin went missing, the need of the hour is for the authorities to address the real cause for the tragedy rather than just treating symptoms. While there is reportedly no imminent danger in the artificial lake formed in the upper catchment of the Rishiganga river as the volume of water is less than expected and it's flowing through a natural channel that has been widened, the focus should be on containing mindless human and construction activity in the fragile ecosystem of the hills. Scientists are still debating the exact cause that led to the flash floods but there is little doubt that such disasters are likely to become more frequent. This could be because of long-term effects of human activity that brew slowly but lead to tragic developments — such as the climate crisis — as well as more recent developments, such as the construction of dams to generate electricity in the mountain terrain. Slowly but surely, we are beginning to feel the effects of climate change. It's in the interest of our own self and our future generations that we heed these warnings and take timely action. Otherwise, it might be too late. While the Government's decision is laudatory in the sense that it would help alleviate some degree of pain being felt by those families who are in the throes of uncertainty and suspense after their kin went missing, the need of the hour is for the authorities to address the real cause for the tragedy rather than just treating symptoms. While there is reportedly no imminent danger in the artificial lake formed in the upper catchment of the Rishiganga river as the volume of water is less than expected and it's flowing through a natural channel that has been widened, the focus should be on containing mindless human and construction activity in the fragile ecosystem of the hills. Scientists are still debating the exact cause that led to the flash floods but there is little doubt that such disasters are likely to become more frequent. This could be because of long-term effects of human activity that brew slowly but lead to tragic developments — such as the climate crisis — as well as more recent developments, such as the construction of dams to generate electricity in the mountain terrain. Slowly but surely, we are beginning to feel the effects of climate change. It's in the interest of our own self and our future generations that we heed these warnings and take timely action. Otherwise, it might be too late.

Kailash card used, Depsang in limbo

The trump card has already been played as quid pro quo for Fingers. This round is win-win for both India and China. Some questions on disengagement from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) need to be asked again: Why did India withdraw from the commanding heights on Kailash range without quid pro quo like Return Status Quo Ante (RSQA) April 2020 integrally linked with withdrawal from Depsang and instead settle for vacation from just north-south banks of Pangong Tso? The answer was located in Northern Army Commander Lt Gen YK Joshi's interviews last week; the details follow. For a year now, India has been claiming it has the skill and tenacity in high-altitude warfare, including Siachen, whereas the People's Liberation Army (PLA) — which perhaps for the first time had occupied posts on Kailash range since 1962 — does not have similar talents. China has imposed additional deployment costs of Rs 1,000 crore, excluding Rs 20,000 crore in emergency operational acquisitions, which is a godsend as in normal course, the transactions would not have materialised. To recap: Under the shadow of COVID-19 pandemic, China diverted the PLA on training in Xinjiang to intrude at multiple places from Depsang to Demchok across 300 km of east Ladakh. India looked like a tubelight bereft of counter-intrusion contingencies. China pushed the LAC westwards to its 1959 claim line, establishing a buffer zone at Galwan and refusing to discuss Depsang. The Galwan clash and an Indian coup de main in that order froze and nudged disengagement which secured an Indian vacation from dominating heights on Kailash range overlooking Chi-



Ashok K Mehta

nese garrisons at Moldo and Spanggur lake. As in the first disengagement, it is advantage China. Beijing has imposed economic costs, transforming the LAC into LoC. While India has politically withstood China's bullying, the perception in the neighbourhood about India's ability to be a net security provider has been cast in doubt. Still the Government has to be congratulated for providing, for the first time, critical operational information about the ongoing three Ds — Disengagement, De-escalation and De-induction. In the past, contradictory information would be leaked by the Government and military officials even as independent journalists claimed they had their own sources, all of which led to mammoth confusion. Last week Lt Gen Joshi, who was pilloried over last year's multiple intrusions, explained how the disengagement deal came about following an audacious tactical operation by stealth to seize strategic heights on Finger 4 and on Kailash range on August 29/30 to turn the tables on the PLA. That these operations were on

the Indian side of the LAC does not diminish their brilliance. Elaborating, Lt Gen Joshi said placing tanks at Rezangla and Rechinla on Kailash range was the game-changer into reviving stalled talks and forcing the PLA to withdrawing from Finger 4 to beyond Finger 8. He noted that the withdrawal plan was in writing for the first time and that the talks would resume. To be clear, details of withdrawal on the south bank are not as specific as on the north bank. In the written agreement, no mention is made of RSQA April 2020 though discussion on other friction points is included. Assuming Lt Gen Joshi has been quoted accurately, the Kailash trump card has already been played as quid pro quo for Fingers. He said no land was ceded to China, presumably referring to the Pangong lake sector and not across the intrusion sites. The field is still wide open — with India's core concerns located at Galwan, and Depsang apparently left in a limbo without the towering Kailash heights available as a bargaining chip. This round is win-win for both

India — with the vacation of Fingers — and China — securing removal of tanks and troops from Kailash range. But using the Ace of Spades in the first move is a big gamble though Lt Gen Joshi said it is not advantage in perpetuity. He called the entire episode — Indian seizure of Kailash heights and the PLA's withdrawal from Fingers as a loss of face for China which has annoyed the Chinese. The resumed dialogue on Saturday ended not in a written agreement but a joint statement to "push for a mutually acceptable resolution of remaining issues so as to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in border areas". Key questions remain: Final disposition of troop separation at Galwan, Ghogra-Hot Springs, Demchok and Depsang. At Galwan, Indian troops were pushed back two-and-a-half km from their traditional patrolling point No 14 and a buffer zone created. China regards Depsang a legacy dispute and the absence of eyeball confrontation may probably preclude its inclusion from a friction point. But it is of the highest strategic sensitivity for India's defence of the Karakoram range and an offensive towards Aksai Chin; and of vital strategic import for China for similar reasons. India could likely be left with China ensclosed along its 1959 claim line, buffer zones predominantly on India's territory, stalemate at Depsang, no RSQA April 2020, de facto loss of territory and most importantly collapse of peace, trust and tranquility along the border, the bedrock of sound and stable bilateral relations. China, on the other hand, wants decoupling of border dispute from bilateral relations. Depsang will prove to be a test case.

NASA's Perseverance is a step in humanity's pursuit of understanding cosmos and our place in it

At 8:55 pm GMT on February 18, a whole new phase of space exploration began — NASA's Martian rover, Perseverance, touched down on Martian soil after a six-and-a-half month journey from Cape Canaveral. The nail-biting landing had all the elements of the last over of a T20 final. Because of the extremely challenging terrain in which the landing took place, it was a very tricky operation which nevertheless ended in a dream landing. What is more, soon after landing, the rover transmitted the first images from the dusty, rock-strewn Martian surface. Perseverance is part of a multi-decadal Mars exploration programme which aims to study the formation, evolution and structure of the Red planet. The programme will also investigate the possibility of past or present life as well as the potential for human exploration of Mars. This was, of course, not the first landing on Mars — starting in 1971 when the Soviet Mars 3 lander became the first spacecraft to safely land on the planet to NASA's InSight lander in 2018, there have been several landings over the last five decades. In addition to the landings, which are technically very challenging, there have been many missions which have explored Mars from orbiting spacecraft. Our own, Mangalyaan, has been in an orbit around Mars for over six years now. What makes Perseverance different is the scale of the operation and its complexity. Begin with

Shobhit Mahajan

its size — almost as big as an SUV, it is about 10 feet in length, 7 in width, 3 feet in height and weighs more than a ton. Although the six-wheeled machine resembles a Lego model, it is extremely advanced technologically. Powered by 5 kg of plutonium dioxide, Perseverance hosts a whole array of very sophisticated navigation, communication, imaging and scientific instruments. The number of instruments on board the rover makes it into a veritable mobile lab. These include instruments for measuring environmental parameters like temperature, wind speed, those for high-resolution images of the surface materials etc. There are also the delightfully monikered SHERLOC (Scanning Habitable Environments with Raman & Luminescence for Organics and Chemicals) and WATSON (Wide Angle Topographic Sensor for Operations and eNginEering). SHERLOC will search for chemicals which could indicate the presence of life while WATSON would provide close-up images of the samples which are to be investigated. And yes, WATSON can also take selfies of the rover itself! There are also several firsts in this mission. The rover carries two very sensitive microphones which will listen to Martian sounds like the wind or the rover moving on the Martian soil. Most interestingly, it carries a small, 2 kg helicopter in its belly which it will lower to the

surface. If all goes well, the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter would be the first aircraft to fly on another planet. This will be a technological tour-de-force since the Martian atmosphere is extremely thin compared to the Earth. The rover landed in a depression called the Jezero crater which is at the edge of what was once a river delta when Jezero was filled with water. The crater is surrounded by high cliffs, large boulders and sand dunes, all of which made the landing extremely treacherous. Interestingly, while descending, the rover took pictures of the terrain below and compared them with the maps stored on-board to make on-the-fly corrections to keep away from the hazardous areas and land safely. The rover is to move around the crater and collect rock samples. Thus what we have here is a roving, robotic Martian geologist. What is more, it will do this for over one Martian year (or two Earth years) during which it would have travelled over 15 km. It will not only collect the samples but leave them at various pre-determined sites for future Martian rovers to collect and bring back to earth. What makes Jezero interesting is that it is the oldest terrain to be explored on Mars — some of the minerals there might have formed almost 3.5 billion years ago. This is important because scientists think that it is in the oldest periods of time that Mars would have been most

conductive to life. Other Martian probes, most notably Curiosity, which landed on Mars in 2012, have also searched for possible signs of life. However, despite some initial promising results, there has been no evidence of any kind of life yet. Perseverance carries on this search and the hope is that because of its location and scale of operations, it might give us a shot at answering the question as to whether life ever existed on Mars. In the last few decades, the search for life in the Universe has moved from being a purely speculative enterprise to a serious research endeavour. After all, as Arthur C Clarke, the doyen of science and futuristic fiction, is reported to have said, "Two possibilities exist. Either we are alone in the cosmos or we are not. Both are equally terrifying". The idea of establishing space colonies on Mars and treating Mars as an exotic tourist destination for the super-rich is wishful thinking at best and commercial hype at worst. Nevertheless, the goal of sending human beings to Mars for exploration certainly looks feasible in the next decade or so. One of the things that would be required would be oxygen in large quantities — not just for breathing since the Martian atmosphere is mostly carbon dioxide, but also for making liquid oxygen propellant for the return flight to earth. MOXIE is an instrument on Perseverance which will be testing the production of oxygen from carbon dioxide. If this is successful, then one of the key issues in human flight to the Red planet would be resolved.

Submission of a letter of demand to the A.D.M,kendrapara of the Duhuria Crossing Market Committee

(A.O. Bureau)
Kendrapara: Feb 24: Hundreds of market committee members, led by committee President Soumya Ranjan Sahu and Secretary Pradeepnath Sharma, met the A.D.M on behalf of the new Subhalakshmi Crossing Bazaar Committee of Duhuria Bazaar under Kendrapara block. Their main claim was that the former president of the market committee, Kshetrabasi Sahu, and the former secretary, Sanatan Muduli, had been in charge of the market committee for almost 11 years today. However, some of the committee's staff and members questioned their work ethic, saying that they had squandered the committee's money and that many of their relatives in the market often took part in the riots and looted. It is alleged that the provided the information to Hussein during a telephone conversation with

Hussein. With this in mind, a new committee is being formed under the name of Sri Sri Subhalakshmi Crossing Market Committee and a humble prayer is being offered to the district administration officials as to how the former committee president Kshetrabasi Sahu and secretary Sanatan Muduli were immediately involved in the smuggling. The land broker and another white man allegedly looted money from the village and fled the village for four years. Nonetheless, how can the firm take firm legal action and action against the plaintiffs who have defrauded the money of the committee, and how the district administration is urging the public to take immediate action and deal with it, as well as the new market committee. All members of the committee have been humbly requested to do so, according to special sources.

Karlapat Elephant Deaths: Central Team Confirms Hemorrhagic Septicemia Reason Behind Fatalities

(A.O. Bureau)
Kalahandi, Feb 24: The three-member Central team inspecting the reason behind the deaths of seven elephants at the Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary in Kalahandi district on Wednesday confirmed hemorrhagic septicemia (HS) as the reason behind the mass fatalities of the pachyderms. The officials have confirmed that the jumbos died due to hemorrhagic septicemia and also expressed their satisfaction over the immediate measures taken by the State forest department to contain



the spread of the bacterial infection inside and near the periphery of the sanctuary. "The Central team has corroborated our findings and confirmed that the elephants died due to

the bacterial infection. They have also taken the samples of the carcass of another jumbo that was found dead in the sanctuary on Tuesday. The sample will be sent to Indian Veterinary Re-

search Institute, Bareilly for detailed examination," informed Principal Chief Conservator Of Forests (PCCF) in-charge Sashi Paul. The team has also expressed satisfaction

over the steps taken by the State forest officials which included disinfection of water bodies and cattle immunization drive to contain the spread of the disease in the wild. The team had advised to continue the drive for a month, stated Paul. Meanwhile, the vaccination of cattle in the nearby villages is in progress by the forest and veterinary officials, he said. On Tuesday, another elephant died at the wildlife sanctuary taking the jumbo death toll to seven in the space of just three weeks.

Rampaging Jumbo Kills Woman And Son In Sambalpur, Husband Critical



(A.O. Bureau)
Sambalpur, Feb 24: Human casualty in elephant attacks continued in the State when a mother son duo was trampled to death by a

tusker at Gadakuna village under Bhojpur forest range of Mohoda Panchayat on Tuesday night. The woman's husband, who also came under attack of

the rampaging jumbo, has been admitted to the Burla hospital with grave injuries, reports stated. As per reports, a family of three, Prasanta Munda (40)

his wife Dina (35) and son Sahid (10) lived in a mud hut near a brick kiln where he worked near Akharadanapada village. At around 3:30 am a tusker from the nearby forest furiously barged into the house, breaking the walls. Awakened by the noise, Prasant rushed out of the hut and tried to distract the elephant. But the tusker turned towards him and attacked with its large trunk. Prashant suffered serious injuries in the attack. While Prasant struggled for his life, the big giant allegedly slammed the

mother son duo on the ground, causing their death instantaneously. Prasant who survived the attack was later rushed to the Burla Medical College for treatment. The Forest Ranger Officer of Sambalpur along with Kuchinda police officials reached the spot sent the bodies for post-mortem. It's not the for the first time that human lives have been lost in the man-animal conflict saga in Odisha. Massive deforestation and invasion of humans into the wild territory is resulting in the increase in such instances.

Kotia Row: Government Schemes Are Still Day Dreams In Kotia, Says Koraput MP



(A.O. Bureau)
Koraput, Feb 24: Amid the heightened tension between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh over a group of villages in Kotia in the district, local MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka on Wednesday said that people in the region are feeling deprived due to the failure of the Odisha government in delivering welfare schemes and providing employment. "Kotia is getting out of the reach of the government due to a lack of communication with the people. Here people are still out of work and permanent income sources which the government should be taking care of

is wanting," Ulaka said following his interaction with villagers in the area. Driving home his point, the local MP said while there has been no allocation of funds under the NREGA scheme since 2014-2015 by Odisha government, the Andhra government, on the other hand, has been providing wages under NREGA every Wednesday. The Koraput MP interacted with residents in Tala Ganjeipadara, Madakar and Fatusineri villages situated in the lower es-corts of the Andhra-Odisha border. The complaints of the locals,

the MP said, mainly revolved around their long pending problems and government apathy in solving those. They reportedly told the Parliamentarian that the Andhra government was trying to cash in on the deprivation of the people in spreading its influence and area by availing various populist schemes and facilities. Meanwhile, Ulaka urged the district administrations and the block administrations to appoint a volunteer in each village located in the border areas so that the people can reach out with their problems as and when they need.

Forest Officials Attacked By Villagers Over Sambar Deer Poaching In Mayurbhanj

(A.O. Bureau)
Mayurbhanj, Feb 24: A team of officials led by the Udala Forest Ranger were attacked by some 30-40 people while they were returning after arresting two accused in a suspected case of deer poaching at Jamudiha village in Mayurbhanj district on late Tuesday night. Acting on a tip off about the hunting of a sambar deer in the area, the team went to the village and picked



up the two persons from their house. The sleuths also seized a hunting gun and around 50 kilograms of deer meat from their possession.

When the forest officials were returning after arresting the two accused, around 30-40 people intercepted and attacked by pelting stone on them.

They also vandalised their van and made them hostages. The assailants also released the two arrested persons (yet to be identified) and took away the gun and meat, added reports. However, local police rushed to the spot after receiving an SOS by the forest team and rescued them after two hours, informed Baripada Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Satosh Kumar Joshi. Later,

the three officials were admitted to the hospital for treatment and an FIR has also been lodged at the Udala Police Station today in connection with the incident. Based on the complaint, police have started an investigation and trying to identify the attackers. "A team has been engaged to identify the attackers and we hope, they will be arrested soon," said the DFO.

No End To Farmers Plight In Odisha: Mandi Nightmare Continues

(A.O. Bureau)
Keonjhar, Feb 24: Irked over irregularities in paddy procurement and faulty token system of the State government, hundreds of farmers from across Odisha staged protests by blocking roads in different parts of the State on Wednesday. The irate farmers of Harichandanpur under Keonjhar district staged a dharna and blocked the by-pass road by piling up sacks of unsold paddy. Vehicular movement along the Naranpur-Duburi road was paralysed for a long time due to the protest. "We have become victims of sheer apathy of



the State government and an incompetent district administration," alleged a protestor. "We will continue with our protests till the procurement process is streamlined and our produce are procured," he said.

Similarly, hundreds of farmers of Patrapur in Balasore district stacked their paddy produce on road, demanding the procurement of the crop. "Many farmers are yet to sell their produce due

to delay and glitches in token generation. If our problems are not solved, we will intensify our protest," he said. On the other hand, Nilagiri Sub-Collector Harish Chandra Jena said that the farmers

staged the road blockade without giving any prior intimation to the district administration. "I will ask the local police to clear the road and then look into the matter," said Jena. Another farmers' organisation under the banner of All India Kishan Khet Majdoor Sangathan of Kishore Nagar in Angul district also hit the streets demanding the withdrawal of the faulty token system for procurement of their crops. They staged a protest before Kishore Nagar block office and submitted a memorandum to Angul Collector.

Andhra Holds Free Health Check-Ups At Kotia Villages

(A.O. Bureau)
Jeypore, Feb 24: Amidst the border row between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh over Kotia villages which is currently sub-judice in the Supreme Court, the neighbouring State has organised a multi-diagnostic free health check-up camp at disputed regions of Kotia here in Koraput district. Health workers from Salur in Andhra Pradesh were seen moving from village to village in Kotia and conducted free health check-ups of local residents. According to reports, ANM worker J Kabita and health worker Munna Rao from Salur (AP) have recently conducted health check up at Talaganjeipadar and other



areas in Kotia. Locals said that health services have been provided under the direct supervision of Chief Medical Officer at Tonam Primary Health Centre in Salur. "Health workers from Andhra Pradesh have conducted health check-up and given us medicine. Blood examinations have also been carried out by

them. Odisha health workers also come to our area occasionally," a resident of Talaganjeipadar in Kotia said. Locals said that health workers from Andhra Pradesh used to visit the tribal hamlets occasionally, but now-a-days they come to the villages two to three times a month.

Alia Bhatt Starrer Gangubai Kathiawadi Teaser is Out, Sardool Sikander Passes Away Gauahar Khan and Zaid Darbar to Participate in Nach Baliye 10



New Delhi, Feb 24: Alia Bhatt looks intriguing in the teaser of 'Gangubai Kathiawadi'. Meanwhile, famed Punjabi singer Sardool Sikander breathed his last on Wednesday. On the occasion of famed director Sanjay Leela Bhasali's birthday on Wednesday, his production house has launched a teaser of upcoming film Gangubai Kathiawadi, starring Alia Bhatt. In another news, it has been revealed that Gauahar Khan and her choreographer-husband Zaid Darbar, who tied the knot on Christmas last year, will participate in the dance reality show Nach Baliye 10. Also, Acclaimed Punjabi singer Sardool Sikander passed away at Fortis hospital in Mohali near here in Punjab on Wednesday. He was 60. Scroll through for more news highlights of the day from entertainment and lifestyle world. Hollywood star Ryan Reynolds has dispelled the rumours that he will have a cameo as Green Lantern in the upcoming Zack Snyder cut of Justice League. Television actress Shweta Tiwari has been hitting the headlines for her transformation. The actress underwent a massive weight loss and her new look is awe-inspiring. Actress Gauahar Khan and her husband, choreographer Zaid Darbar have reportedly been approached to participate in the dance reality show Nach Baliye 10. In Nach Baliye, popular film and TV couples compete with each other. In the last season, even exes participated in the show. Mourning the demise of Sardool Sikander, Kapil Sharma shared a memory of the late artist on social media. He posted a video clip in which Sikander is seen blessing Anayra by singing devotional songs with band members present. Little Anayra is seen in Sikander's arms as he sings. Ginni Chatrath and Kapil sit on either sides. Alia Bhatt takes up an accent as she becomes Gangubai Kathiawadi, President Kamathipura, in the upcoming film's teaser.

New Delhi, Feb 24: Actress Gauahar Khan and choreographer Zaid Darbar, who tied the knot on Christmas last year, will reportedly participate in the dance reality show Nach Baliye 10. In Nach Baliye, popular film and TV couples compete with each other. In the last season, even exes participated in the show. Now, according to a latest report in SpotboyE, are on the monetary part."Both Zaid and Gauahar are brilliant dancers. Where the former is a well-known choreographer in the industry, the latter is popular for her terrific dance performances. Gauahar had also previously appeared in Jhalak Dikhla Jaa, the Indian version of Dancing With the Stars. She was crowned the first runner-up of the dance reality show.



Gauahar and Zaid have shown interest towards the show. A source quoted in the publication said, "Gauahar Khan and Zaid Darbar have been approached to participate in the dance reality show Nach Baliye 10. In Nach Baliye, popular film and TV couples compete with each other. In the last season, even exes participated in the show. Now, according to a latest report in SpotboyE, are on the monetary part."Both Zaid and Gauahar are brilliant dancers. Where the former is a well-known choreographer in the industry, the latter is popular for her terrific dance performances. Gauahar had also previously appeared in Jhalak Dikhla Jaa, the Indian version of Dancing With the Stars. She was crowned the first runner-up of the dance reality show.

Nora Fatehi breaks down as she talks of her struggle: If anyone went through what I did, they would've been shattered

Mumbai, Feb 24: Nora Fatehi has opened up about the initial struggles that she faced as she took steps towards her acting ambition. 'Maybe other girls went through the same things as me and gave up, it's so easy to give up,' the actor said. Actor-dancer Nora Fatehi, opening up about the struggles she endured in her career and life, says that the people that she has met in her journey have been "vicious" and she is certain anyone in her place would have given up on their dreams. The Canadian dancer began her big screen journey in India in 2014 with Hindi feature Roar: Tigers of the Sundarbans. She was, however, first noticed a year later in SS Rajamouli's blockbuster epic Baahubali: The Beginning, where she appeared in a song. Nora finally rose to fame with a special song, "Dilbar", in John Abraham's 2018 actioner Satyamev Jayate. The song was a recreation of the hit Sirf Tum track, featuring Sushmita Sen. Nora's electric screen presence and splendid dancing skills turned her into an online phenomenon soon after the song release.



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lease. The dancer continued her hit streak with an appearance in Rajkumar Rao-starrer Street (2018), Marjaavaan in 2019 and finally Street Dancer 3D with Varun Dhawan and Shradha Kapoor, where the actor featured not only in songs but a substantial supporting role. In a recent interview with Dubai-based YouTube show host Anas Bukhash, Nora broke down, recalling the difficulties she overcame to make her mark as a performer. "You think you meet all these

kind of people and realise the world is vicious but also... I will tell you why I cried because maybe other girls went through the same things as me and gave up. It's so easy to give up. And I thought about the people I met, who really brought me down... Not in India, but everywhere. Even in Canada, where I was just hustling," Nora says in the video that she shared on her Instagram page on Wednesday. Further, the actor says if someone had to endure even half of the life's harshness that she faced, they would have lost hope and the world

would have to bid goodbye to "one more person who could make an impact." "I think that any girl or even a guy, who had gone through all that, would have been shattered. They would have lost hope. If a human loses hope, it's the worst thing. I keep thinking that even if 50 percent of the things that I went through if a girl or a guy went through, it would have been one more person in the world that we would have lost. They could have been a great person, a person who made an impact, a difference in the world." On that note, Nora says that she firmly believes that people can rise up to challenges if they have "hope and confidence" instilled in them since the beginning. The actor appealed to parents around the world to encourage their children to face the world and communicate with them the realities of an adult life instead of imposing restrictions on them and providing a sheltered childhood that will only make them weak. "I hope parents instil confidence and hope in kids to go out in the world. Rather than telling them not to do this or that or not wear this or not watch that, they should prepare kids for things like marriage, how to be with someone, how to be in the workplace because workplace can be really bad. It can either ruin you or make you for life. Most of the times it ruins you. It kills your personality, charisma and fills you with negativity. And then you inject the same negativity to your kids."

Time to Dance teaser: Isabelle Kaif, Sooraj Panchali are dazzling dance partners

Mumbai, Feb 24: Sooraj Pancholi and Isabelle Kaif-starrer Time To Dance teaser is out, offering a sneak-peek into the dreamy dance sequences featuring the pair. Time to Dance marks Katrina Kaif's sister, Isabelle's acting debut. Two days ago, the makers unveiled the film's first look along with its release date, March 12. The 30-second teaser begins with Sooraj walking with a suitcase in a foreign location, suggesting his character is moving to a new place. The clip then introduces Isabelle in different dance postures. What follows is the pair taking to the stage and performing dance forms like Latin and Ballroom.

The teaser claims that Time to Dance is the first Indian film to show Latin and Ballroom dancing prominently. Time to Dance marks choreographer-turned-director Stanley Menino D'Costa's debut. He has also penned the film. Renowned choreographer-director Remo D'souza's wife Lizelle has produced Time to Dance. The film's trailer will be released on Thursday. Besides Time to Dance, which was reportedly completed in 2018 itself, Isabelle has two projects in her kitty. She will be seen in S u s w a g a t a m Khushaamadeed, which also stars Pulkit Samrat. Earlier this year, the model-turned-actor



shared a picture on Instagram to announce the project. S u s w a g a t a m Khushaamadeed is said to be a social entertainer with an underlying mes-

sage of social harmony. Last year, Katrina had revealed about Isabelle's project with Salman Khan's brother-in-law Aayush Sharma titled Kwatha. The film was

scheduled for a 2020 release but due to the coronavirus-induced pandemic, Kwatha was postponed. The makers have not shared any update on it yet.

5 Pulses That You Should Add to Your Diet

New Delhi, Feb 24: Pulses are a staple part of the diet in most Indian households. They are the seeds that grow inside pods of legume plants and are a rich source of protein dietary fibre, essential vitamins and minerals. Pulses contain antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. They are also good for heart health, blood pressure and blood glucose levels. Mentioned below are five such pulses.

1. Dal - Dal or split pulses are one of the most common dishes served with rice or chapatis in Indian households. Pulses like Masoor, Urad, Moong and Bengal gram are used to make soupy dishes. They are a good source of protein, fibre, carbohydrates, vitamins such as B-complex and minerals like iron, magnesium, zinc and calcium. Pulses also contain phenolic compounds such as flavonoids that have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-tumour properties. They have a low glycaemic index and are good for patients with high blood sugar levels.



2. Kabuli chana - Chickpeas or garbanzo beans are known as Kabuli chana, as it was originally brought to India from Afghanistan. Chickpea curries are famous for their strong aroma and taste and are consumed with rice and Indian flatbreads like Naan. They are rich in dietary fibre, protein, vitamins A, C and E, essential minerals. Isoflavones of chickpeas have potential protective effects on the heart, bones, brain, and may prevent cancer.

3. Kala chana - Brown chickpeas, also called Kala chana and Bengal gram, belong to the same family as Kabuli chana but are darker and smaller. Kala chana is softened by soaking in water and are either consumed raw or cooked with pumpkins or banana flower. The health benefits of Kala chana are similar to Kabuli chana.

4. Rajma - Rajma masala and Rajma chawal, made with red kidney beans or Rajma, are regularly consumed in North Indian states. Rajma is a rich source of protein, dietary fibre, carbohydrates, and vitamins and minerals. Its fibre content can help in weight loss. Rajma polyphenols also have anti-cancer properties.

5. Matar - Peas or matar is used in a variety of recipes like curries, dal and other dry vegetable preparations. Matar is rich in protein, vitamins, minerals and fibre. They are good for the digestive system and have a low glycaemic index.

World's largest stadium in Motera is named after Narendra Modi



New Delhi, Feb 24: Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said that the newly-built Motera Stadium is not just the largest, but it is also one of the best stadiums in the world. The Motera cricket stadium in Ahmedabad, earlier known as Sardar Patel Stadium, has been re-named as Narendra Modi stadium. The sta-

dium was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind ahead of the India vs England 3rd Test on Wednesday. The venue in Gujarat's Ahmedabad has a capacity of 1,10,000, making it the largest in the world. However, for this Test match only 55,000 spectators will be allowed in because of Covid-19 protocols.

Exactly a year back, the venue was host to the joint town-hall show by PM Modi and US President Donald Trump. Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju said the newly-built Motera Stadium is not just the largest, but also one of the best stadiums in the world. A day before the Test match, Rijiju along

with BCCI secretary Jay Shah visited the stadium to take note of the world-class facilities. Spread over 63 acres, the stadium has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 800 crore and with a seating capacity for 1,32,000 spectators, it has surpassed the hallowed Melbourne Cricket Ground which can ac-

commodate 90,000. "The total area is equivalent to 32 Olympic size soccer fields put together," stated a note from the Press Information Bureau giving specifics of the enormous structure. Modi stadium Amit Shah during the inaugural function at Motera Stadium. The facility, which was closed for renovation in 2015, was witness to some major milestones in Indian cricket in its previous avatar. These included Sunil Gavaskar reaching the 10,000 runs mark in Test cricket against Pakistan in 1987 and Kapil Dev claiming his 432nd Test wicket to become the highest wicket-taker in the world in 1994, surpassing Sir Richard Hadlee. Australian firm Populous, which designed the Melbourne Cricket Stadium among others, is also behind this new stadium.

Pink Test: England win toss and opt to bat; Washington, Bumrah back in India's playing XI

Ahmedabad, Feb 24: England won an important toss and elected to bat against India in the third Day/Night Pink Ball Test here on Wednesday. Local man Jasprit Bumrah replaced Mohammed Siraj in the India playing XI along with off-spinning all-rounder Washington Sundar, who comes back in place of

Kuldeep Yadav. England had Jofra Archer, Zak Crawley, James Anderson and Jonny Bairstow coming into the side. The players out from the last match are Moeen Ali, Rory Burns, Dan Lawrence and Ollie Stone. India: Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane,

Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah. England: Dominic Sibley, Zak Crawley, Jonny Bairstow, Joe Root (captain), Ben Stokes, Ollie Pope, Ben Foakes (wk), Jofra Archer, Jack Leach, Stuart Broad, James Anderson. Photo (ICC)



Chelsea tops Atletico in Champions League with Giroud's bicycle-kick goal

New Delhi, Feb 24: Oliver Giroud's 68th-minute bicycle-kick goal against Atlético Madrid was initially disallowed for offside and it took nearly three minutes for video review to reverse the call and secure Chelsea the 1-0 away win in the first leg of the round of 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday. After his great overhead kick found the net to break the deadlock in a difficult match, all Olivier Giroud could do was wait. Giroud's 68th-minute bicycle-kick goal against Atlético Madrid was initially disallowed for offside and it took nearly three minutes for video review to reverse the call and secure Chelsea the 1-0 away win in the first leg of the round of 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday. Giroud was clearly in front of the defenders when he pulled off his acrobatic shot and few Chelsea players complained when the linesman raised his flag, but VAR determined that the ball came from Atlético defender Mario Hermoso instead of Chelsea midfielder Mason Mount, thus annulling the offside. "I did not know what to think about the goal, I just focused on hitting the overhead kick and was pleased to see it go in the back of the net, I had no clue about being offside," Giroud said. "Mason Mount said he did not touch the ball. Good for the team, good for me." The result kept Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel unbeaten in eight matches since he took over the squad to replace Frank Lampard. "Fantastic result, fantastic goal. Well deserved," Tuchel said. "It was a very disciplined performance — a deserved shutout." Atlético was the home team but the match was played in Bucharest, Romania, because of travel restrictions preventing visitors from Britain entering Spain. The second leg will be on March 17 in London. In the other

round-of-16 match on Tuesday, Bayern Munich defeated Lazio 4-1 in Italy. It was the second consecutive loss for Atlético after a seven-match unbeaten streak in all competitions. It was also the eighth straight game in which the Spanish club has conceded a goal, extending its worst run without a clean sheet since coach Diego Simeone arrived in late 2011. "It's been a difficult week but we have to keep competing," Atlético midfielder Koke Resurrección said. "We have to raise our heads and try to win the second leg. There's no other option for us." It had been a lackluster match until Giroud's goal, with neither team managing to create many significant scoring opportunities and with the goalkeepers not having to work too hard. Chelsea controlled possession and looked a bit more dangerous, but both sides appeared to be satisfied with the scoreless draw and didn't take too many risks. "We knew they were ready to suffer with eight people in the box," Tuchel said. "The intention was to keep the intensity high. This is what we did very good. We never let them breathe or come out for counter-attacks. We have a big reward with this result. This is one of the toughest challenges to open a defense like (Atlético's)." Atlético was outshot by Chelsea and finished the match with no attempts on target. "We know the importance of the away goal in Europe so that is why I was pleased to help the team win the game," Giroud said. "We managed it well and we were confident but faced a great team and I think we were very committed and knew their main strengths. We dealt with it, but we have to stay focused and complete the job." Hermoso was trying to clear the ball from the area while under pressure from Mount and kicked it backward.



Felicitation by President, Home Minister mark Ishant Sharma's 100th Test



New Delhi, Feb 24: India's veteran fast bowler Ishant Sharma was on Wednesday accorded a guard of honour by his teammates after being felicitated by President Ram Nath Kovind and Home Minister Amit Shah ahead of his landmark 100th Test match. The 32-year-old Ishant is only the second Indian fast bowler after former captain Kapil

Dev to play 100 Test matches. Before the start of the day-night third Test against England, the pacer received a memento from President Kovind while Shah handed him a commemorative 100th Test cap at the Narendra Modi Stadium here. As he made his way into the ground after England opted to bat, captain Virat Kohli's men lined

up to honour his longevity and service to Indian cricket. "@ImIshant was felicitated by the Honourable President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind & Honourable Home Minister of India Shri Amit Shah before the start of play here in Ahmedabad," the BCCI tweeted. Besides the President and home minister, also present during the inauguration of the

world's largest cricket stadium were sports minister Kiren Rijiju and BCCI secretary Jay Shah. In his landmark game, Ishant provided the home team a perfect start as he removed Dominic Sibley in the third over. Though he has had many memorable moments in his career so far that has nearly spanned a decade and a half, Ishant

struggled to name one while speaking to reporters ahead of the game. "If your career is 14 years long and you are still playing, you cannot name just one highlight. It is difficult to pinpoint just one highlight, every sportsperson has the graph going up and down," Ishant said. During the first Test against England earlier this month in Chennai, Ishant became the sixth Indian and third pacer from the country to take 300 wickets in Test cricket, joining legendary former captains Kapil and Anil Kumble. Ishant, who has 11 five-wicket hauls and picked up 10 wickets in a match once, made his Test debut back in 2007 against Bangladesh. Prior to the start of the match, Ishant was hailed by the likes of Kohli, Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Ashish Nehra.

Tiger Woods out of surgery on leg after car crash

New Delhi, Feb 24: Golfer Tiger Woods underwent a "long surgical procedure on his lower right leg and ankle" at a Southern California hospital on Tuesday after suffering multiple leg injuries in a single-car rollover crash. Woods' Twitter account posted an update Tuesday night that included a statement from Dr. Anish Mahajan, the chief medical officer and interim CEO at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. Mahajan's statement read, "Mr. Woods suffered significant orthopedic injuries to his right lower extremity that were treated during emergency surgery by Orthopedic trauma specialists at Harbor-UCLA Medical

Center, a level 1 trauma center." Comminuted open fractures affecting both the upper and lower portions of the tibia and fibula bones were stabilized by inserting a rod into the tibia." Additional injuries to the bones of the foot and ankle were stabilized with a combination of screws and pins. Trauma to the muscle and soft-tissue of the leg required the surgical release of the covering of the muscles to relieve pressure due to swelling. "Woods' team added that the golfer was "currently awake, responsive and recovering in his hospital room." ESPN and the Los Angeles Times reported earlier in the evening that Woods sustained a shattered

ankle, a compound fracture in one leg, and a fracture of the other leg. At a press conference Tuesday afternoon, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said there was "no evidence of impairment" at the time of the early-morning crash but that Woods appeared to have been traveling at a "relatively greater speed than normal." Villanueva said there were no skid marks or signs of braking. However, the investigation will take several weeks, he said. Authorities said Woods' injuries were not considered life-threatening. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said deputies responded at approximately 7:12 a.m. to the scene of



a rollover in the area between Rolling Hills Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes. Woods was extricated from the car through the windshield area and taken to the hospital via ambulance. Jaws of life were not used, officials said later Tuesday. "Tiger Woods was in a single-car accident this morning in California where he suffered multiple leg injuries. He is currently in surgery and we thank you for your privacy and support," said Mark

Steinberg, Woods' agent. Woods was on his way to Rolling Hills Country Club to give a lesson to NFL quarterbacks Drew Brees and Justin Herbert, Fox News and ESPN reported. The vehicle sustained major damage, authorities said. Woods was the only occupant of the vehicle. "Because of the situation and the way that you found the vehicle, he wasn't able to open the door and come out,"

Non – Resident Odias Bhawan Inaugurated in Bhubaneswar

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Around one and half crore Odias residing outside Odisha in different metropolitan cities of India, other states and in abroad can contribute a lot for the overall development of their mother state, opined by distinguished dignitaries. The Guest speakers attended the inaugural Ceremony of Non Resident Odias Bhawan at Unit – 2 here expressed strong confidence that this Bhawan will play a vital role in establishing and maintaining social, cultural and emotional relationship between Odisha and non – resident odias. Attending the function as Chief Guest, the State Higher Education Minister Dr. Arun Sahoo gave a clarion call to NROs to ex-



tend active co-operation, support and help for the social, economic and intellectual growth of Odisha. The Bhawan shall function as a transit home for the NRO's coming from outside and will definitely cater to their logistic need and service in the state capital, hoped Dr. Sahoo. Guest of honor in the meeting state Rural development and

Labour Minister Sushant Singh wished fast progress of the NRO's Bhawan. Addressing the gathering, Chairman of World Odisha Society Kishore Dwibedi appealed to Odias across the Globe to stand strong and united for the protection of the larger interest of their mother state and to ensure Odisha's all round wellbeing. Organised

by the Management Institution of the Bhawan, Delhi based Odia Mahamanch, the ceremony was attended by well known personalities like Anant Narayan Jena, MLA, Dr. Byomkesh Ray, MLA & President BJD Youth Wing, Sunanda Das, MLA, Prasanna Patsani, Former MP, Senior B u r e a u c r a t s Kulamani Biswal, Choudhary Ramakant

Das, Music composer Mohit Chakraborty and Social Activist Subhashree Das. Porminent NRO's present during the occasion include Nihar Samantara from Bengaluru, Hitesh Mishra from Mumbai, Itishree Praharaj, Sushree Sangeeta, Bibhu Prasad Sahu, Abani Sahu, Kaveri Behera from New Delhi and Uma Shankar Panda from Manesar. The entire programme was well organised and successfully executed by the Two Directors of Odia Mahamanch Gobardhan Dhal, Manoj Nayak as well as Convenor of Mother Tongue Movement Pabitra Maharatha. Senior members of Mahamanch like Rakesh Biswal, Tanmay Swain and Arun Sahu helped in organising the event.

Lemon Grass Processing Unit Inaugurated At Sorisapadar : Supported By Utkal Alumina

(A.O. Bureau)
Tikiri, Feb 24: A lemon grass oil extraction unit has been jointly inaugurated by Mr. Mazhar Beig, Unit Head, Utkal Alumina International Ltd. along with Mr. P a t i t a p a b a n a Samantaray, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Rayagada on 24th February 2021 at Sorisapadar village in Rayagada district. Utkal

promoting lemon grass cultivation along with establishment of lemon grass oil extraction plants in its peripheral villages since last three years. As of now more than 160 acres of land has been covered under lemon grass cultivation by 111 farmers in sixteen different villages of both Mines and Refinery periphery along with establishment of two units

sured such kind of support from UAIL in the days to come. Mr. Samantray, DDH, Rayagada applauded the efforts made by Utkal Alumina in promoting this cash crop for enhanced income of the farmers, Mr. Sudhakar Biswal, Vice President Finance Accounts & Commercial, Mr. Mukesh Jha, General Manager Mines,



Vedanta organizes Mega Cataract Surgery Camp in Lanjigarh

(A.O. Bureau)
Lanjigarh, Feb 24: Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh, India's premier producer of metallurgical grade alumina, organized a mega cataract surgery camp on 23rd February for the patients residing in the vicinity of the alumina refinery. The camp was organized by Vedanta Hospital at Lanjigarh, in association with Mahanadi Netra Chikitsalaya, Sonapur, adhering to the COVID restrictions. A medical team including surgeons and ophthalmologists was deployed to ensure best-in-class check-up and treatment to elderly patients suffering from cataract. A total of 33 patients with complete/partial blindness due to cataract were screened and were successfully operated. The camp was flagged off by Mr. Rakesh Mohan, Chief Operating Officer, Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh, in the presence of district officials, local leaders, villagers and Vedanta officials.



The first Cataract Operation Camp commenced in 2014 and since then it has benefited nearly 650 people in the region. Talking about this initiative, Mr. Rakesh Mohan, Chief Operating Officer, Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh unit said, "Healthcare for the community is one of our thrust areas. We are proud to share that over the years, we have successfully reached out to the community members. Through these camps, we ensure that the quality of life of people in and around our areas of operation is enhanced. Vedanta Lanjigarh unit

is committed to the improvement of health indicators of local communities in Lanjigarh and the surrounding villages." Acknowledging Vedanta's efforts, by Dr. Prashant Kumar Pramanik, AYUSH Doctor, Mobile Health Unit, Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh said, "As a part of Vedanta's multiple initiatives towards the betterment of the society, the Cataract Operation Camp is also a regular program through which the people in need get operated through the support of Vedanta. Through the Mobile Health Unit, we have increased the mobility of

providing essential treatment and health check-ups on the doorstep. The MHU visits the villages on a regular basis." Appreciating the program, Mr. Dulab Dhangramajhi, a beneficiary from Ambodala, said "Vedanta has always been proactive in taking up measures to ensure the health and well-being of the community. The cataract surgery camps organized by the company have benefitted many people of the nearby villages. Vedanta's support and initiatives to improve our lives are really appreciable." Vedanta's social interventions in the do-

main of sustainable livelihood, women empowerment, quality education, health, water and sanitation, bio-investment and community infrastructure reach out to a total of 69 villages in Lanjigarh and nearby areas, benefiting about a lakh people in a year. It empowers more than 3000 women from 305 self-help groups (SHGs), provides healthcare services to about 30,000 people annually, gives educational support to more than 2800 students, has planted more than 5.4 lakh trees in the community, and built 500 plus infrastructural projects at community level. Vedanta is the largest producer of aluminium in India and remains the premier manufacturer of metallurgical grade alumina. The company operates a 2 MTPA (million tonnes per annum) capacity alumina refinery in Lanjigarh (Kalahandi district, Odisha), India since 2007 and an associated 90 MW captive power plant.

Alumina International Limited a unit of Hindalco Industries of Aditya Birla Group under its CSR initiatives has promoted this unit and extended support to a local entrepreneur cum farmer Mr. Gauranga Bisoi to set up this enterprise. It is worth mentioning here that, under Project Sugandha UAIL in collaboration with the Horticulture Department of Rayagada District Administration, has been

at Jogiparitunda and Sorisapadar villages. This year it has been planned to expand this activity to another 200 acres along with the establishment of two more extraction units. Speaking on the occasion Mr. Beig, Unit Head of UAIL appreciated the joint effort made by the company and the Horticulture Department in promoting sustainable livelihood for the farmers and as-

Mr. Siba Mahapatra General Manager CSR-R&R-Land & Liason and Dr. Lopamudra Priyadarshini, GM Community Relationship and Sustainability graced the occasion as special dignitaries from UAIL along with Mr. Beer Bahadur Kumar, Branch Manager Utkal Grameen Bank Tikiri. Team CSR UAIL has coordinated the entire event.

Paradip Refinery of IndianOil won Public Relations Society of India National Award 2020

(A.O. Bureau)
Paradip, Feb 24: IndianOil's Paradip Refinery has been conferred with PRSI National Awards 2020 under category of Industries' Response in Covid-19 Situation. The award ceremony was organized virtually on 21.02.2021, in the presence of esteemed dignitaries, Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Hon'ble Union Minister of Education, Smt Baby Rani Maurya. Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Mr P



Borremans, President, International Public Relations Association and Dr Ajit Pathak, National President, PRSI. Mr. TDVS Gopalakrishna, Executive Director & Refinery Head, Paradip

Refinery, received the award in virtual platform. PRSI National Awards are a recognition of benchmarked achievement in areas of Public Relations and Communications Management.

UP Assembly passes bill on religious conversion amid din

(A.O. Bureau)
Lucknow, Feb 24: The Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2021 seeks to replace the ordinance promulgated in November last year that provides for imprisonment up to 10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 for violators. Amid protests by the Opposition, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Wednesday passed by

voice vote a bill aimed at curbing religious conversions by fraudulent or any other undue means, including through marriage. The Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2021 seeks to replace the ordinance promulgated in November last year that provides for imprisonment up to 10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 for violators. The bill was passed in the House

even as Aradhana Misra, the Congress Legislative Party leader and Lalji Verma, the leader of BSP in the Assembly, protested. Under the bill, a marriage will be declared "null and void" if the conversion is solely for that purpose, and those wishing to change their religion after marriage need to apply to the district magistrate. The bill mainly envisages that no person shall convert, either di-



rectly or indirectly from one religion to another by use or practice of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage nor shall any person abet, convince or conspire such conversion. The onus to prove that the conversion has not been done forcibly will lie on the person accused of the act and the convert, it said. An aggrieved per-

son, his/her parents, brother, sister, or any other person who is related to him/her by blood, marriage or adoption may lodge an FIR about such conversion, according to the bill. BJP leaders had said the legislation intends to counter alleged attempts to convert Hindu women to Islam in the guise of marriage, which right-wing Hindu activists refer to as "love jihad".