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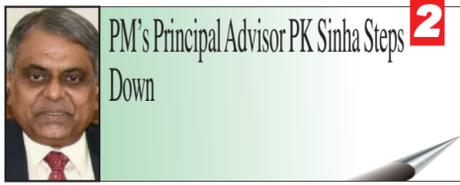
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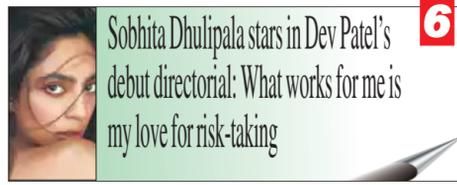
WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2021



PM's Principal Advisor PK Sinha Steps Down **2**



Focus Is On Strengthening Party's Position In Eastern States: BJP Odisha In-Charge **3**



Sobhita Dhulipala stars in Dev Patel's debut directorial: What works for me is my love for risk-taking **6**



PV Sindhu and Co. chase elusive title at All England Championships **7**

NEET UG 2021: Odisha Urges NTA To Open Additional Exam Centres Pipili By-Poll: Date Announced

Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: Citing the difficulties that students might face while going to a few selected examination centres in Odisha to appear for all-India NEET UG 2021 test amid frequent lockdown and shutdown due to the Covid pandemic, the State government requested the National Testing Agency (NTA) to set up one exam centre in each district of the State. In a letter, Additional Chief Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Department, PK Mohapatra, urged NTA Director General, Vineet Joshi on Monday to consider the



State's proposal for one NEET UG exam centre in its 30 districts. In view of Covid-19 pandemic, it will be highly unsafe for students to visit the few examination centre

physically appear for the NEET UG 2021 test. Further, due to frequent lockdown and shutdown imposed by different district administrations the transporta-

tion system is very often disrupted making the movement of student's further worse, the letter mentioned. Worth mentioning, the NTA, which is conducting the NEET

UG 2021 examination, notified Angul, Balasore, B er h a m p u r , Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela and Sambalpur as examination centres in Odisha. "Odisha has got vast tribal pockets having geographically inaccessible areas and far away from the urban centres of the State for which the students of this State may be deprived of appearing the NEET UG as they will have to move long distance for appearing the test," the letter read. On March 9, 2021, Mohapatra discussed the issue with the NTA DG through video conferencing.

Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: The Election Commission of India (ECI) today announced that by-election to Pipili Assembly Constituency will be held on April 17. A gazette notification in this regard will be issued on March 23. The last date for filing of nomination papers is March 30 while the nominations will be scrutinized on March 31. The last date for withdrawal of candidatures is April 3.



Counting of votes will take place on May 2 . By-poll to the constituency was necessitated

after demise of former MLA late Pradeep Maharathy, who died on October 4 last year.

Remarkable Cut In Special Central Assistance To Odisha In 2020-21



New Delhi, Mar 16: The Centre released significantly lesser funds to Odisha under the Special Central Assistance (SCA) Scheme in 2020-21 financial year as compared to three previous financial years. As per the data provided by Minister of State for Home Affairs, G. Kishan Reddy in a written reply to question in the Lok Sabha,

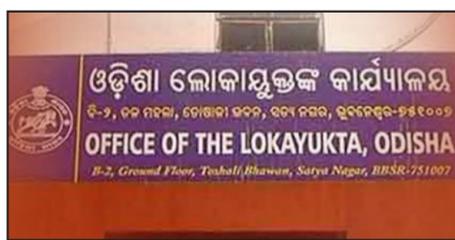
the State received Rs 14.25 crore in 2020-21 financial year. Odisha received Rs 10 crore in 2017-18, Rs 66.67 crore in 2018-19, Rs 66.66 crore under the Centre's special assistance scheme. The Union Minister further mentioned the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, covered under the Security Related

Expenditure (SRE) Scheme, were reviewed in April-2018. There are 15 districts of Odisha under the SRE scheme with effect from April 1, 2018. These districts are Angul, Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Deogarh, Kalahandi, Kandhmal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabrangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambhalpur and Sundargarh, the Union Minister stated. Of these, seven districts namely Boudh, Sambalpur, Nayagarh, Angul, Deogarh, Nabarangpur and Sundargarh have reported no LWE violence incidents in 2020, the Union Minister's reply pointed out.

Vigilance Submits Report On Alleged Scam In Purchase Of PPE Kits

Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: The State Vigilance on Tuesday submitted the preliminary investigation report to Odisha Lokayukta on alleged irregularities in the purchase of PPE kits, masks and other equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic last year. On December 7, 2020, Lokayukta Ajit Singh had asked the State Vigilance to probe alleged irregulari-

ties in the purchase of PPE kits, masks and other equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic and submit the preliminary report within two months. On the basis of the report, a three-member bench of the Lokayukta will hear the matter on March 26, Congress leader and activist Sudarshan Das and chairperson of the Odisha Vikash Parishad Sushant Padhi informed today.



Odisha Issues Fresh Guidelines To Contain New COVID Strain



Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: With the recent spike in cases of COVID-19 reported from various States like M a h a r a s h t r a , Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, the Odisha Government has issued fresh guidelines for the people of the state. The Health Department has warned that the new strain is more dangerous and highly contagious than the older one as it can remain alive on

the dry object for around eight days and can easily enter the human body than the older one. Some of the symptoms of infection include fever, nausea, headache and body pain, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, the emergence of skin disease and itching, sore throat and nasal congestion and chest pain and coughing. With this, the State Government has asked people to follow COVID appropriate

behaviour such as washing hands, wearing masks, and maintaining social distance. People have been asked to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as per the government protocol, stay away from crowded places and those returning to Odisha from other states should undergo home isolation for seven days. Those developing COVID-19 symptoms should undergo the test.

Convert IGH Into Medical College, Odisha Min Urges Dharmendra

Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: Odisha Steel & Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallik has written to Union Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan urging the latter to intervene in converting the Ispat General Hospital (IGH) in Rourkela city into a medical college. In the letter, Mallik mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on April 2, 2015 announced that IGH will be converted into a medical college and Super Speciality Hospital. The work in this regard

was being carried out by the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), that functions under the Union Steel Ministry. "However, IGH was only converted into a 200-bedded Super Speciality Hospital, not into a medical college even after six years of the announcement by the PM. It is disappointing," said Mallik in the letter. He urged Pradhan to intervene in the matter and direct the RSP authorities to take steps for converting IGH into a medical college.

Over Rs 134 Cr Incentive Given To Migrant Returnees Till Aug Last Yr: Odisha Min

Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: Odisha Government has distributed a whopping Rs 134.62 crore to migrants, who returned to the state and stayed in various COVID Care Home (CCHs) across the state during the pandemic till August last year, informed Labour Minister Susanta Singh in the Assembly today. Replying to a question of Khandapada MLA Soumya Ranjan Patniak, the Minister said a total of 10,07,330 migrants returned to Odisha from various states between March and October last year. Each migrant was provided with Rs



2,000 incentive from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund after completion of their isolation period. A sum of Rs 134.62 crore was provided to 6,73,079 migrant labourers till August last year. Besides, special COVID-19 financial assistance

was given to the migrant labours for their livelihood under various schemes, including MGNREGA, DDUGKY, UWEI and Mission Shakti. This apart, Odisha Building & Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board provided Rs 1500

Special Financial Assistance (SFA) each to 4,689 registered workers till August, 2020. However, the Minister claimed that there has been no information on workers going to other states again after relaxation in COVID-19 restrictions.

Oscars 2021: 'Kalira Atita' Out Of The Race

Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: Odia movie 'Kalira Atita', directed by Nila Madhab Panda, is out of the race for Oscars 2021. In a social media message, Panda today stated 'Kalira Atita' is out of the Oscar nomination race. But Panda mentioned he would continue to talk on climate issues through the movie. He also congratulated the nominees and wished them luck. The movie,

starring Pitobash Tripathy, revolves around a young man from Satavaya village in Odisha's Kendrapara district who returns to his village to find devastation caused by climate change. The character Gunu, the protagonist essayed by Pitobash, symbolises the struggle of innumerable hapless villagers who were at the receiving end of nature's fury.



Former Congress leader P C Chacko formally joins Sharad Pawar-led NCP



New Delhi, Mar 16: Former Congress leader P C Chacko, who quit the party last week, Tuesday formally joined the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) headed by Sharad Pawar. Chacko,

who quit the Congress over his differences with the party leaders in Kerala, said NCP is a partner of the CPI (M)-led LDF in the southern state and he would work for the victory of the Left

candidates in the April 6 Assembly polls. Announcing his resignation from the Congress last week, Chacko had alleged group interest in deciding party candidates for the coming assembly elections.

FIR registered against Waseem Rizvi for moving SC seeking removal of some verses of Quran

Bareilly (up), Mar 16: An FIR was registered here against former UP Shia Waqf Board chairman Waseem Rizvi for allegedly hurting the religious sentiments of Muslims with his petition in the Supreme Court seeking removal of some verses of the Quran which he claimed promoted terrorism. The FIR was registered at the Kotwali police station on Monday evening following complaints by Anjuman Khuddam-e-Rasool secretary Shan Ahmed and an organisation known as Ittehad-e-Millat Council, the police said. The case was registered under section 295A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the IPC, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Bareilly,



Rohit Singh Sajwan said. Chairman of the Raja Action Committee, Maulana Afroz Raja Qadri, claimed sectarian forces were operating behind Rizvi, and that time has come to unmask them. On Sunday, members of the Muslim community held a protest in Lucknow against Rizvi. Shia cleric and senior member of the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board Maulana Kalbe Jawwad and a large

number of people took part in the protest at the Bara Imambara. Addressing the gathering that day, Maulana Syed Salman Hasni Nadvi laid stress on Muslim unity and described Rizvi as a "kaafir (non-believer)" and "mujrim (criminal)". "We are believers of the Quran and Allah first, Sunni and Shia later. Hence, there are no differences among us as far as the Quran is concerned," Nadvi had then said.

Maulana Jawwad had told reporters that Waseem Rizvi was a part of the "jamaat (group)" that goes to the extent of even falsifying their own existence and betraying their own religion. "He has been indulging in anti-religious activities, but this time, he has broken all barriers by raising a finger on the Quran," Jawwad had said, urging the government to immediately arrest Rizvi and impose a heavy fine on him. In

Bareilly, Mufti Ahsan Raja Qadri of the Dargah-e-Aala Hazrat, a prominent centre of Bareilly Muslims, too had condemned Rizvi's move and said not even an iota of change in the holy book was possible. In a statement, he had said, "Waseem Rizvi is an enemy of the Quran and Islam. He is doing this to gather cheap popularity and to save himself from the Waqf scam." Rizvi filed the PIL in the apex court on Thursday.

40% of families displaced during Pong Dam construction yet to be settled: Himachal govt

Shimla, Mar 16: Nearly 40 per cent of the families displaced during the construction of Pong Dam in Himachal Pradesh 50 years ago are yet to be settled, according to information tabled in the ongoing budget session of the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday. In a written reply to a query by Dehra MLA Hoshyar Singh, Forest Minister Rakesh Pathania said that during the construction of Pong Dam in 1968-72, people displaced from the area were to be rehabilitated not in Himachal but in Rajasthan. "As per latest information, out of a total 16,352 families declared eligible for allotments in Rajasthan,



6,355 families are yet to be settled against which 2020 cases are pending with the Rajasthan government for allotment," he said. Also, in the question hour Romila, an anganwadi helper in Hamirpur, fell sick a few days after being vaccinated for Covid and died around 18

days later, Health Minister Rajiv Saizal told the Assembly. He said that the cause of death will be ascertained after the autopsy report is out, and it cannot be said currently if the death was linked to vaccination. In three years from 2018 to 2020, around 630 police cases under the

SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act were registered in Himachal, among which the conviction rate was 9 per cent. Around 1,400 challans were issued for illegal mining in the jurisdiction of police stations Jawali, Nurpur and Indora in Kangra district during the last three years. Kullu

MLA Sunder Singh Thakur alleged that despite there being little snowfall in his area this winter, HRTC buses remain suspended on some routes causing inconvenience to the public. The Himachal Kisan Sabha held an agitation outside the Vidhan Sabha complex to protest against the three farm laws passed by Parliament last year. Another protest was held against the state education department by arts teachers who alleged that they had been given training for teaching art and craft by the State Council for Vocational Training but were yet to be appointed by the government.

Mumbai, Mar 16: The Indian Premier League Governing Council (IPL GC) today announced Upstox, one of India's leading and fastest-growing digital brokerage firms, as an official partner for IPL, which will begin on April 9th, 2021. This will be a multi-year partnership. Founded with the vision of making financial investing easy, equitable, and affordable to all Indian investors, Upstox provides online investments in Stocks, Mutual funds, Digital Gold, Derivatives, and ETFs for both investors and traders. Backed by marquee investors such as Tiger Global, Upstox currently has over 2.8 million customers. Mr Brijesh Patel, Chairman, IPL, said "We are pleased to have Upstox



on board as an official partner of the Indian Premier League 2021. As one of the most-watched cricket leagues in India, IPL along with Upstox, one of India's fastest-growing digital-trading platforms, can create a huge impact on the audience, especially the millions of Indian youth who are financially independent and looking for more options to manage their portfolios." Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Ravi Kumar, Co-founder &

CEO, Upstox said "We are thrilled to partner with BCCI for IPL 2021. In India, Cricket is more than just a sport. It is an important part of our culture and social life, with a huge fan-following, especially by the millennials. IPL has paved a bold new direction to Indian cricket in the last decade just like Upstox, which is revolutionizing finance in India. This is what sparks a natural connection between both the brands. With this integration of sports and finance, we intend to spread financial awareness across the country." For the first time in the history of IPL, a brand in the Stock and Mutual Fund sector would be partnering at large to create awareness about this category.

PM's Principal Advisor PK Sinha Steps Down



New Delhi, Mar 16: Former Cabinet Secretary and Principal Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), P.K. Sinha, has resigned from his post on personal grounds. Sources said the retired 1977-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre put in his papers on Monday evening. Sinha was appointed in the PMO in September 2019 following the general elections, after he retired as the Cabinet Secretary. The veteran former bureaucrat was earlier made the Officer on Special Duty (OSD)

in the PMO on August 30, 2019 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi accepted the request of his Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra to be relieved from the post. After Misra, Sinha became the second high-profile official to the exit of the PMO. Misra had resigned in August 2019 after the Lok Sabha elections, prompting a rejig in the PMO. Sinha had served as the Cabinet Secretary from June 13, 2015 to August 30, 2019. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the appointment of Sinha as

the Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister with effect from September 11, 2019. His appointment was co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders, whichever came earlier. Sinha has also held senior positions at the Centre. He had served as the Secretary in the Ministries of Power and Shipping and as a Special Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. He also held various assignments in Uttar Pradesh. Sinha did his graduation in economics from the St. Stephen's College in Delhi, before doing his post-graduation from the Delhi School of Economics. He also obtained a Diploma in Public Administration and an M. Phil in Social Sciences. His areas of specialisation include energy, infrastructure and finance.

Permission for new pvt banks to participate in govt business will be based on RBI guidelines: FM Sitharaman

New Delhi, Mar 16: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said in Parliament that permission to new private banks for conducting government-related business will be given under the RBI guidelines. Sitharaman, during the Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha, said the government has now "only indicated" the RBI to allow other private banks to perform government-related business to ensure there is a level playing field. "Now, following the existing norms based on which several banks have been given permission to do the business. So, those rules as per the RBI guidelines be applied on newer banks and new private banks which approach the RBI," she said. The RBI, being a regulator, has established norms

and those norms will be applicable to the new banks, she added. The minister was responding to a query about whether the government will adopt any criteria to permit new banks for taking up government-related business. Responding to another query by Shiv Sena leader Anil Desai that if public sector banks will weaken by allowing private banks to conduct government-related business, Sitharaman said some private banks and all public sector banks are doing this. "Some customers are already benefiting from private banks from such services. The attempt now is to bring a level playing field. Some private banks are already doing, all public sector banks are doing, why not extend to all private sector banks so that ev-



everybody gets an equal opportunity," she explained. This is being done because the business is growing and many more citizens are approaching the banks. As it was highlighted, the ease of doing business will have to be extended to all customers, she said. Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur said banks handle two kinds of businesses. One is the agency commission under which

revenue receipts and payments on behalf of the central and state governments and pension payments in respect of the Centre and state governments or any other item advised by the RBI is carried. On the other hand, certain items fall under the work, which does not have the agency commission, but that has to be done by the bank like furnishing of the bank guarantees and banking business, etc.

Stating that there is an increase in the share of private banks in the banking sector, Thakur said the deposit of the private banks has increased from 12.63 per cent in 2000 to 30.35 per cent now. The advances, too, have increased from a mere 12.56 per cent to 36 per cent now. That apart, the share of the private sector in priority sector lending is rising. The private banks have given loans of Rs 12.72 lakh crore, which is close to 50 per cent of the priority sector lending. During the COVID period, private bank participation in the government's emergency credit line guarantee scheme has gone up. Under the scheme, the cumulative sanction from public sector banks was Rs 95,261 crore, which was 38.22 per cent of total lending.

Mobile Recharge Scam: Odisha Man Held For Duping People Of Rs 5 Crore

(A.O. Bureau) Cuttack, Mar 16: The Twin City Commissionerate Police have arrested a person for allegedly duping people to the tune of Rs 5 crore on the pretext of recharging mobile phone numbers. The accused has been identified as Bipra Prasad Swain of Balikuda area in Jagatsinghpur district. According to police sources, the accused had formed



an online company namely 'Sangvi Enterprises Limited' at 42 Mouza under Cuttack Sadar police limits. He had engaged some agents who used to

collect money from people for recharging their mobile phone numbers and

DTH accounts after offering them annual plans ranging from Rs 999 to Rs 1499. After paying the amount, the duped customers got services for 5 to 6 months instead of 12 months. Swain was apprehended by police today during a raid while multiple computers used in the offence have been seized from his possession. Efforts were on to arrest other accused, police said.

Focus Is On Strengthening Party's Position In Eastern States: BJP Odisha In-Charge



(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: The BJP's focus has been on strengthening further its position in eastern States including Odisha, informed the party's Odisha unit In-Charge D. Purandeswari. Talking to Kanak News channel, Purandeswari said currently the party is focusing to build up its position at grassroot level in the State. Alleging that Naveen Patnaik-led State government has failed to utilize the Central funds properly, the BJP Odisha unit In-Charge stated, "We are getting feedback the Central funds are being di-

verted." She further said the party's Central leadership has given a direction to the party activists to work towards safeguarding interests of people of the State. "This is the reason why BJP MLA Pradip Panigrahi attempted suicide in the State Assembly over mandi issues," she explained. BJP requests the Odisha CM to come out of his residence and understand the issues of the people, she said. She said the Odisha CM has to give answers as to why he has been absent in the sessions of Odisha Assembly for around two years despite that fact

that Patnaik he has been staying one and half kms away. Asked about whom BJP will project as its CM candidate in Odisha during next general polls, Purandeswari said, "All our party activists are our leaders and we will present them before the people of the State. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan is a party activist and has been carrying out his responsibilities well." Hitting out at Naveen Patnaik further, "During the 2019 election the CM promised to irrigate 10 lakh acres of agri land. We want to ask how many farm lands have been irrigated since the 2019 polls.

Sketch Of Unidentified Woman To Be Widely Circulated: Odisha Police

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: Sketch of the unidentified woman, whose skeleton was found inside a seized vehicle on premises of Janla Outpost under Jatni police limits, is likely to arrive today, informed DCP Uma Shankar Das. Once the sketch that was sent to Hyderabad for skull mapping arrives, it will be put up near all police stations and other public places, informed the DCP. Earlier in the day, statements of the Jatni police station IIC and suspended Janla Out-

post In-charge Satyabrata Grahacharya were recorded in connection with the incident, he added. Recovery of the skeleton from a seized SUV on premises of Janla Police Outpost had come to fore on March 13 though newly-appointed Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi earlier informed that the skeleton was found on February 12, 2021. In this connection, Janla Outpost In-charge was placed under suspension on March 13 for dereliction in duty.



Youth Hospitalised After Murderous Attack In Puri

(A.O. Bureau) Puri, Mar 16: A youth was hospitalised after being attacked by three miscreants for allegedly denying to pay extortion money at Mishra Sahi under Baseli Sahi Police Station in Puri district on Tuesday. Reportedly, the injured youth identified as Pradip Tripathy alias Tima alias Sukanta was building a house in the locality because of which he was allegedly receiving extortion threats for the last few

days. He was on his way to Markandeya Pushkarini today morning when he was attacked by the miscreants with sharp weapons. Following which he was rushed to Puri Hospital where he is undergoing treatment. While locals have identified the miscreants as Luka, Babina, and Gopal, family members have alleged that the three have also looted Tima of his gold chain and smartphone.

1.24 Lakh People In Odisha's Urban Areas Don't Have A Roof Over Their Heads



Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: As many as 1,24,041 people living in urban areas of Odisha don't have a roof over their heads, informed Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister

Pratap Jena today. Replying to a query by Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Charan Majhi, the H&UD Minister said that out of them, 23,345 people are from the scheduled tribe

(ST), 22,251 are from scheduled caste (SC) and 33,327 are from economically weaker sections. Jena stated that while 1,778 houses were provided at affordable prices in the State

KiITians Shine In KVPY Glory

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: KiIT International School rejoices in the prodigious success of their students in the recently announced KVPY examination results. Master

Deepanshu Mallu (Rank: 065), Master Divyanshu Mallu (Rank 067), Master Vidyadhar Sahoo (Rank 851), Master Kanisk Modi (Rank 252) and Master Pratham Prateek

Mohanty's (Rank 707) remarkable performance is a testimony to the institutional brilliance that has become synonymous to the brand of KiIT International School.

The Congress Student union demanded the arrest of the culprit



(A.O. Bureau) Puri, Mar 16: The congress Student leader demanded before puri SP that to arrest the culprit who have attached their leader it is alleged. That regional Councilor protecting the culprit and

also threatening the Youth congress workers even to kill in this context Sonu Chakravarti attacked Anil Beja with a sword that the police is not arresting the culprit for this reason the youth congress

union has given a petition to SP for immediate action in this rally the congress with members were as fellows Ex MLA Ganeswar Behera, Yasir Nawaz Ashutosh Mishra and so many Persons of youth congress.

Forest Fire Breaks Out Near Chandaka Sanctuary

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: A major fire broke out at a forest located at Charikharia near Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary, today On being informed, Fire Services personnel rushed to the spot and initiated efforts to douse the flame, which was spreading quickly towards the sanctuary. The reason behind the outbreak of fire was yet to be ascertained. Similar



fire was reported at Barunei hill forest in Khordha district, couple of days ago. Worth mentioning, the forest fire in the

Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj district was brought under control few days ago, thanks to rainfall in the region.

BJP MPs Seek Union Minister Piyush Goyal's Intervention Over Paddy Procurement Issues In Odisha

(A.O. Bureau) Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: In an all-out attack against the Odisha government, a delegation of BJP MPs from Odisha led by Union Minister of Petroleum and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday accused the rul-

ing-BJD of misleading the farmers on issues of paddy procurement. Pradhan, who led the team from the State and met the Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Minister Piyush Goyal today, alleged that the



Odisha government has been belying its own systematic failure in governance and providing allied agricultural services to farmers in the State. "Despite this years' better-than-expected harvest of paddy due to a favourable

monsoon, farmers in Odisha are suffering due to State Govt. apathies, administrative inefficiencies and long-standing malpractices," Pradhan quoted himself in his Twitter page as apprising the matter to Goyal. He also

informed Goyal that the State government of Odisha did not revise its ceiling of paddy procurement of 19 quintals for every acre of irrigated land and 13 quintals for every acre of non-irrigated land in spite of the bumper crop yield this season.

EDITORIAL

White elephants

Our varsities must not function in silos and there is a pressing need to bring about systemic changes. These are public-funded “white elephants”, a fiefdom of those who have been able to secure permanent appointment either on the basis of their talent or “otherwise”, as it offers terms and conditions – handsome salary, job guarantee, HRA, TA, DA and other perks – which the highly competitive private sector can hardly match. Most of the Vice-Chancellors are political appointees who are subservient to the cause of their masters and their single-point agenda is to appoint those who are either “recommended” or belong to a particular ideology. Earlier, the Congress and the Left ruled the roost, particularly in Central varsities, but now the BJP and RSS are in the driving seat. Our universities are fraught with nepotism, favouritism, bribery, financial misappropriation and all forms of corruption. These are the focal points of an ideological war among the faculty members but out of focus for academics. Crippled with inherent corruption and bogged down by incompetence, our universities have failed to keep pace with their global counterparts and stand nowhere in terms of research, innovation and generation of ideas. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasised on reforming universities so that they can play a leading role in India’s development in terms of ideas, innovations, quality research and startups. These goals cannot be achieved unless those in the university



system give up their complacency. We need to understand that our universities have a wider role to play than just being the mega centre of awarding degrees and handing out diplomas. All hell broke loose when Nita Ambani, the Reliance Foundation chairperson and non-executive director of Reliance Industries, was made a visiting professor in the social science faculty of the Banaras Hindu University. A section of teachers and intellectuals are opposing it tooth and nail on social media and a few even argue that it is part of the Modi Government’s “hidden agenda to privatise public universities”. Those who join an Indian university as PhD research scholars know that more than their academic work, their servility counts. No surprise, completing their thesis and submitting research often takes longer than usual and they are considered “jhola dhone waale” (who carry the bag of professors). Armed with the tricks to deceive plagiarism tools and with leisure and pleasure of their guides, they somehow secure a PhD. Ironically, many of these PhD holders end up as teachers in colleges. Now, those who have paralysed the university system for years are alleging that it’s being privatised. Obviously, they are more concerned about protecting their vested interests rather than about the universities landing in private hands. However, it’s for universal good to abandon such unfounded apprehensions and move towards making our universities progressive. Our students can gain a lot from the experience of an industry giant or, for that matter, from bureaucrats, doctors, engineers, scientists, Army officers, young entrepreneurs and others who have excelled in their respective fields. Our universities cannot remain functioning in silos and there is a need to bring about systemic changes. The sooner it starts, the better it would be.

Green energy as the next growth propeller

India must go for far-sighted policy initiatives and a collaborative response with multilateral institutions to transit to clean energy. At the Quad summit last week, as also at the last G20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated India’s commitment to combat climate change, as we move towards the target of “net-zero emissions by 2050”. This calls for far-sighted policy initiatives and a collaborative response with multilateral institutions to achieve a transition to clean energy. The sunrise sectors that emerged as post-pandemic growth catalysts have been healthcare, ed-tech, digitisation, fin-tech and e-commerce. While there is a greater urgency to transition to smart infrastructure and green technologies, this space is yet to see traction, as renewable energy, electric vehicles (EVs), sustainable infrastructure, smart urbanisation and smart ruralisation, water harvesting, recycling of post-usage wastage and so on, are still in nascent stages of adoption by corporates and consumers. Currently, there is a resistance to invest in the vast array of utilities and products that come under the sustainability sector, like solar and wind energy, or EVs, as most products have shorter technology life cycles. Also, these products need a proven track record of usage and need to achieve economies of scale to lower costs before consumers actually buy into them. Just to illustrate this point, electric mobility is a sunrise sector in the sustainability field, with the potential to create 15 million jobs globally. Considering that India has high dependency on oil imports and rising levels of pollution remain a challenge, autonomous vehicles and EVs are a solution to both the problems. Yet, EVs account for less than



Bindu Dalmia

one per cent of the total vehicles sold in India. Similarly, though solar power prices have declined globally and India produces the cheapest solar power as project costs have declined, the transition to solar energy is just two per cent of the global energy generated. To accelerate the transition towards deep-decarbonisation and facilitate adoption, the Government needs to further incentivise the supply side through productivity-linked schemes as they have done for batteries, as also spur consumer demand through access to cheaper finance. India’s weightage is today seven per cent of the world’s GDP, based on purchasing power parity. As we begin the road to recovery and target to reflate to healthy pre-crisis growth averages of six-eight per cent, increased economic activity will mean higher mobility levels and higher manufacturing intensity, therefore, higher emissions. Even though India maintains that we are on target to achieve the goal of producing 450 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030, we require \$600 billion of funding to leap-

frog to that goal. Apart from multilateral funding for mega renewable projects and for FDI for electric vehicles, there is need for easier financing through development finance institutions for long gestation projects. While the Government supports newer financial instruments like green bonds to raise capital at competitive rates to finance climate-friendly projects, public sector banks need to extend lower interest rates to companies at the forefront of sustainable ESG investing. So, what kind of financial allocations and prospects are we looking at? Being the most populous country with a high-living density, being a large manufacturing hub and having a large consuming population, our average carbon footprint is estimated at 0.19 tonne per capita among the poor, and 1.32 tonne among the rich. As the target is to cut emission intensity of the GDP by 33-35 per cent by 2030, this in itself holds great business potential. Second, there is heightened awareness by corporates to provision for ESG investing into their business planning. So, with 24 of

the largest conglomerates in India (that contribute to emitting 530 million tonnes of CO2 annually) having signed a declaration on climate change, this is an important beginning, as the private sector plays a vital role in bringing technical expertise and enhanced spending on research and development. According to the World Economic Forum estimates, a “nature-positive economy” could globally deliver \$10 trillion of annual business and create 395 million jobs by 2030. It is projected that for every \$1 spent to advance the global energy transition, it offers returns of around \$3-8 as renewable and clean energy infrastructure construction generates twice as many jobs per \$1 million spent as compared to fossil fuel projects. The vast potential for the transition to green technology is embedded in Budget 2021 itself, as also the 15th Finance Commission report pushing for priority outlays with Rs 7 lakh crore allocated for urbanisation over the next five years; Rs 5 lakh crore allocated for water, sanitation and waste management; Rs 15,000 crore for clean air; and Rs 2.87 lakh crore for the Jal Jeevan Mission. With the Government having set an aspirational target of becoming a \$10 trillion economy by 2030, much of India’s growth will unfold in the next decade. This makes integrating the principles of green recovery a win-win business proposition that can address the concerns of jobs, growth and sustainability. This is an opportunity that must be tapped into by forging stronger public-private partnerships with the Centre and State Governments, as also by accessing global expertise for technology inputs if we are to make the green transition in conformity with the Paris Agreement.

What India needs for population stabilisation

Shailaja Chandra

The state needs to do three things: incentivise later marriages and child births, make contraception easy for women and promote women’s labour force participation. The National Population Policy 2000 affirmed a commitment to achieve replacement levels of fertility (total fertility rate of 2.1) by 2010. Ten states — Karnataka, Punjab, Gujarat, Assam, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala — and Jammu and Kashmir, have achieved this goal, albeit much delayed. Kerala and Tamil Nadu had accomplished it decades earlier. This fertility decline over half of India has cut across all sections of society — the privileged and the poor, those educated or not, and the high and low caste. The National Family Health Survey-4 has shown how TFR has reduced even among illiterate women from all religions in the southern states — even in Kerala and Telangana which have a high proportion of Muslims. The question that arises is how could the Southern states achieve population stabilisation so early and several others could follow suit, while Uttar Pradesh and Bihar continue to drift? When fertility reduction in the five southern states succeeded, irrespective of literacy and education levels and could permeate all sections, it overturns the conventional wisdom that literacy, education and development are prerequisites for populations to stabilise. The simple

explanation is that fertility decline was achieved because southern governments proactively urged families to have only two children, followed by female sterilisation immediately thereafter. Almost the entire state apparatus was marshalled to achieve this objective. The difference between the progressive South and the slowpoke Central-North is becoming disproportionately skewed. UP and Bihar are 23 per cent of India’s population and are projected to grow by over 12 per cent and 20 per cent in the next 15 years. Their high TFR pervades all religious groups despite the avowal that high fertility prevails disproportionately only among Muslims. Action to prevent unwanted pregnancies particularly in these two Hindi belt states is urgently required. For decades UP has had a dedicated agency — SIFPSA (State Innovations in Family Planning Services Agency). But its website gives dated information in contrast to its stellar COVID dashboard — demonstrating that communication and technical difficulties are overcome once a subject gains priority. Women in rural UP are still giving birth to four or more children. In some districts, the contraceptive prevalence rate is less than 10 per cent. In many districts neither Hindus nor Muslims use modern family planning methods. In such a scenario, demographics will eclipse economic

growth and destroy the gains from a young populace. UP’s over-reliance on traditional methods of contraception needs to be swiftly replaced with reliable and easy alternatives. Bihar has the highest fertility rate in the country and also the highest outmigration. Almost half the women in some districts have a migrant husband and empirical evidence shows women’s unwillingness to seek contraception in the absence of the husband, resulting in unprotected sex when he returns. While national and state policies emphasise male vasectomy, politicians never champion its adoption. No other country in the world uses female sterilisation as excessively as India. After the 2014 Bilaspur outrage, when more than four-score sterilisations were conducted in less than six hours and several women died, one expected that states would go slow on compulsory female sterilisation. But surprisingly, even Kerala with all its progress still relies on female sterilisation (above 88 per cent) as the predominant modern method of contraception. Indonesia and Bangladesh introduced injectables right from the late 1980s but India only did so in 2016. Executed properly, one jab renders protection from pregnancy for three months. This method needs greater impetus given the helplessness of women who carry the burden of

unwanted pregnancies. Three things are needed: Incentivise later marriages and child births; make contraception easy for women and promote women’s labour force participation. The population momentum, if managed properly in the Hindi belt, will remain India’s biggest asset until 2055. By 2040, India will be the undisputed king of human capital. But alongside some other disturbing nationwide trends must also be counteracted without delay because stabilisation isn’t only about controlling population growth. A balanced sex ratio is essential to secure social cohesion. Son preference, falling sex ratios, and an abhorrence towards begetting a second or third female child are negative developments that have penetrated even into rural areas. The inheritance law favouring women’s rights to ancestral property is far from being implemented. Decades of policing doctors and sonography machines have failed to bear results. China is already facing a demographic catastrophe because its nearly four decade-long one child policy resulted in a strong son preference and a large bride shortage. India will need more than girl friendly schemes to change track. And then there is ageing. Paradoxically, it is the Southern states that will face problems in future. Having largely redeemed their demographic dividend, the cohort of the elderly will start outstripping the working age population.

A press release from the Bharatiya Janata Party First of all, greeted to all Public Relation camp by BSF at chilipadar



(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, Mar 16: A press release from the Bharatiya Janata Party First of all, greeted to all from the Bharatiya Janata Party. The main reason for the press release issued by the BJP was that on 14 March 2021, the Kalimela Citizens Forum had issued a number of questions and answers to the Malkangiri MLA's insulting remarks. "The rescue squad wasn't called for him," she told the Associated Press. The lease, however, was

leaked to various media outlets in the Kalimela tehsil office, which was investigated and proved to be correct. Based on this, two government employees were also suspended on the orders of the Malkangiri district magistrate. The Kalimela Nagarik Manch, on the other hand, alleges that the leases were forged in the names of 24 people, while 90 per cent of the 24 are? belonged to the tribal community they said. In response, the BJP is asking the

Kalimela Citizens Forum if it has a list of the 24 people who have been given corrupt leases. Another allegation is that Aditya Majhi, a legislator from Malkangiri and a tribal man, was working against the Adivasis and questioned who was working for them. So the BJP party here is questioning the Kalimela Citizens Forum, whether Aditya Madi is working against the tribals, can he prove who he is working for? On the other hand, those who got land leases

in Kalimela tehsil to cover up the land corruption in the Kalimela tehsil office on what basis. Coming up with government regulations? If so, why were the two employees, RI and the clerk, suspended? Former District Magistrate Manish Agrawal, who was involved in the distribution of the irregularities, knowingly hid corruption under his umbrella. "I am just happy to be free. We would like to inform the district magistrate on the basis of which, if nothing

is wrong, the two employees were suspended. If there is a mistake, the Kalimela tehsildar has not been suspended. A criminal case should be filed against those who forcibly handed over the land. This is because according to the rules of the Odisha government, there is no land plot in the name of the person who got the lease or in the name of his father anywhere in Odisha, his family has an annual income of less than Rs 60,000/- and no one is employed by the government. But how did those who did not follow the law get the lease? The press release attached a copy of the list of individuals who had obtained the lease. "It simply came to our notice then that some of the indigenous people had less leases and some less common ones."

(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, Mar 16: A public Relations Camp on behalf of BSF The camp was attended by hundreds of indigenous men and women from Chilipadar and Tikarpada villages. Anant Ram Sharma, Commandant of BSF 144 Battalion, Inspector Vaidyanatha Shankar, N. Mintang, Ashwini Kumar, Jagannath Das, Sarpanch of Kudumulugumma Gram Panchayat, Mrs. Pahla Pangi, Degree College

Principal Ashok Pradhan, Social Worker Ganesh Chandra Pattanayak For the poor, cooking utensils such as plates, cups, bowls, pots, decks, sarees to wear, lungi, dhoti, banians, towels, various items used in daily work, shoes, slippers, torch lights, umbrellas and student handkerchiefs. A large whiteboard was provided for the classrooms of the students of the degree colleges of the region, along

with the distribution of pencils, books, accounts and compasses. On the occasion, BSF Inspector Vaidyanatha Shankar awarded all the villagers that the BSF has always been committed to the security of the area and to the welfare of the people. "Only with good relations between the people and the administration can the development of backward areas like Chilipadar be accelerated," said Sarpanch Pahala Pangi.



Odisha Cop Held For Sexually Harassing Accused's Wife

(A.O. Bureau) Bhadrak, Mar 16: A havildar posted at Bhandaripokhari police station in Odisha's Bhadrak district was today detained for allegedly sexually harassing an accused's

wife. According to reports, a person of the area was on March 14 arrested by Bhandaripokhari police and forwarded to court. He was later remanded to judicial custody. Havildar Haramohan Nayak had

contacted the accused's wife and assured the woman of her husband's release from the jail. On March 15, Nayak reached the woman's house and allegedly sought sexual favours from her. The cop also misbehaved with the woman and groped her, she alleged. As she screamed for help, neighbours rushed to the spot and nabbed Nayak. He was later handed over to police. On the basis of a complaint lodged by the woman, Bhandaripokhari police registered a case and started an investigation.

Five days district level agricultural exhibition inaugurated at Malkangiri



(A.O. Bureau) Malkangiri, Mar 16: Five days district level agricultural exhibition in Malkangiri was organized by Chief District

Agriculture Officer and the exhibition program was inaugurated by the Additional Dist Magistrate Birsan Pradhan at 6.30 pm today within

the premises of the District Chief Agriculture Officer. In this occasion the CDAO sri Kailash Chandra Swain District Horticulture Officer

Shri Madhu Sudan Dalei District Fisheries Officer Shri Rajendra Kumar Patra District Water shed Project Director Shri Bhagirathi Raut Senior Scientist of the Krushi vigyan kendra Dr. Anuj Rai. Odisha Millet Mission District Coordinator Aniket Lakeri and Integrated Farming (SPPIF) Assistant Engineer Soumya Ranjan Majhi Odisha Livelihood Mission and The ORDA Assistant Project Director Balaji Patnaik Malkangiri block chairman

Akshaya Nayak ,OAIC jr engineer Santanu samal District Fishery officer Rajendra Kumar Patra CDVO sri sarangadhar satapathy were present the main objective of today's program was to Direct communication between stakeholders. Coordination between policy makers and administration Topics-based workshops between farmers and scientists. And to encourage Congratulations to leading farmers and other stakeholders. sharing new technology to farmers.

Former Woman Sarpanch Arrested In Fake Note Racket

(A.O. Bureau) Dhenkanal, Mar 16: Police have arrested a woman for her alleged involvement in fake currency note racket in Hindol area of Dhenkanal district. The arrested woman, Mamata Sahu is said to be a former Sarpanch of B a n d h a h u d a panchayat in Narsinghpur area of Cuttack district. According to sources, the woman lived in a rented house in Hindol area. She had gone to Hindol market last evening and purchased grocery items worth Rs 11,000. When she made the payment, the shop owner raised suspicious after touching the notes and informed the police. Hindol police immediately reached the spot and took the woman into their custody and



seized the fake notes. The woman was later arrested. The police said the woman has admitted to trading fake notes during the questioning. The police will apply in a court to take the woman on remand for further questioning to find out the source of the fake notes and the racket working behind it. Earlier this

month, counterfeit currency notes with a face value of Rs 7.90 crore was seized by police at Sunki outpost under Pottangi police limits in Koraput district. Patangi police had seized the fake notes when it was being transported to Chhattisgarh in a car by three persons. The three persons were arrested.

'Bring My Child Back,' Appeals Odisha Woman Whose 'Pet' Wild Boar Was Seized

(A.O. Bureau) Keonjhar, Mar 16: Call it a love for wildlife or a mother's unrelenting love, Kuntala Kumari Penthei from Purushottampur village in the district can easily be spotted every noon in the nearby jungle calling out her pet 'Dhuda', a wild boar. It has been over a year since Kuntala lost her younger daughter to illness. But the wild boar calf that came running to her at the funeral of her daughter made her rethink the priority. She could either shed tears on the untimely death or as she herself terms it, embrace the new guest in her life as God's own way to fill her bosom again with maternal love. She chose

the latter and brought home the calf after naming it Dhuda to nurture it as one of her own. As time flew, the calf drew attention from all around, ultimately spelling doom for Kuntala as the forest department came searching for it and took away Dhuda from her custody to set it free in the jungle just seven days back. "I had raised it from infancy. Who will not get hurt if somebody snatches away her child all of a sudden," said a weeping Kuntala. Kuntala's elder daughter Rajashree Penthei posed some questions at the department too. "Dhuda was with us from the beginning. It does not know how and where to search for food. And it is par-



ticularly dangerous for its survival in the wildfire that has been raging in the jungles all across Odisha," she said. It is pertinent to mention here that the wild boars (Sus

Scrofa) are protected under Schedule III of the Wildlife Protection Act in Odisha and thereby it is completely illegal to either kill or keep it as a pet. Kuntala lost her

child again, but this time to the forest officials who assured her that Dhuda will be taken care of and will be kept under observation. The Range Officer of Telkoi forest range, Pramod Kumar Sethi said, "To become emotional is natural, but her concerns about the boar's food are not true. They are wild creatures and they know perfectly well how to survive in the jungle." But for a mother who poured all her love and affection to that creature, it was no less than a cruel separation that the government forced on her. "They have neither any empathy nor love for the boar," she lamented accusing the forest officials of taking away her child.

People Throng Odisha's Jajpur After Shiva Lingam, Temple Remains Surface In Baitarini River

(A.O. Bureau) Jajpur, Mar 16: Dasarathpur village of Jajpur district witnessed a footfall of thousands of people after the remains of a Shiva shrine were found in the Baitarani river here on Tuesday.

The remains of the temple and an ancient lingam were reportedly found near the Siddheshwar Temple in the locality. As per reports, the top portion of the temple ruins was first visible partially on the occasion of Maha



Shivaratri which was observed on March 11. Meanwhile, considering it to be some divine intervention, the locals, as well as people from nearby villages, have started thronging the place to offer prayers.

Rashami Desai Speaks Out on Her Ugly Divorce with Nandish Sandhu, Says 'Everyone was Doubting Me'



a stressful time, and she pretended to be someone she wasn't. She said, "Honestly when I was in that process, the entire process was stressful. I couldn't deal with it. Hence, I wasn't being myself and was trying to be someone who I was not." She further added, "I was always upfront, but during that phase, everyone was doubting me. People judge you independently and not as a couple. They don't understand that it was between two people. There must be a reason right? We got separated and the partner has moved on and I am doing good." Rashami revealed that she was in depression and nobody acknowledged her issues. "There used to be numbness in me. I was in depression and no one understood or took care of me. There was nobody to acknowledge my issue. My childhood was troubled, but thankfully my professional life was good. My personal life was messy but I realised that I am not answerable to anyone but me. The moment I realised things became easier," she added.

New Delhi, Mar 16: Actress Rashami Desai opens up about her troubled personal life and her ugly divorce from Uttaran costar Nandish Sandhu. Actress Rashami Desai, who returned to the spotlight with her stint on

Bigg Boss 13, has opened up about her turbulent relationships. In conversation with Bollywood Bubble, Rashami Desai spoke at length about her divorce from Nandish Sandhu, who worked with her in Uttaran. She said it was

Raveena Tandon's Post for Daughter Rasha Thadani's Birthday is Adorable

New Delhi, Mar 16: Actress Raveena Tandon's daughter Rasha Thadani turned sixteen on Tuesday, March 16. Since morning, the actress has been sharing a bunch of pictures which are a mix of the birthday celebration and adorable throwbacks. In the latest post, she has shared pictures in which one can see baby Rasha strike cute poses. A couple of photos in the carousel are of the day's celebration in which Rasha can be seen posing with her grandparents and father, Anil Thadani. As expected, the post has gone viral in no time with Raveena's fans liberally dropping in their



good wishes in the comments section. Her friends Farah Khan, Bhavna Pandey and Ridhima Pandit, among others have also commented on the post. Farah wrote, "Happy birthday beautiful dancer," while Ridhima

said, "Happy Happy bday to Rasha." Some fans also chose to drop red heart and pink heart emojis in the comments section. In another post, Raveena has shared snippets from Rasha's birthday party with her friends.

Why consuming ginger is great for your immune system

New Delhi, Mar 16: The year 2020 made everyone realise the importance of eating healthy,

exercising, and working towards boosting the immune system. As such, kadha concoctions and

superfoods became the buzzwords. But, did you know that ginger — a staple in most Indian



Adhyayan opens up about whether he'd work with ex-girlfriend Maera Mishra again

New Delhi, Mar 16: Adhyayan Suman was asked if he's willing to work with ex-girlfriend Maera Mishra again. The couple spoke about their breakup last week. Actor Adhyayan Suman's new music video has been released. It comes on the heels of his confirmation about his relationship with Maera Mishra, his co-star in the video, having ended last year. Adhyayan said in a new interview that he'd be open to working with her again, after Peg Daariya. Adhyayan, the son of actor Shekhar Suman, embarked on a parallel music career after his acting career suffered a blip. He told SpotboyE, "I haven't fought with anybody. As I already told you about relationships, log aapki journey mein aate hain aur jaate hain (People come and go). If some-



body stays back they have a reason. So, there is nothing to fight about it. So, if tomorrow not just with her, but with any of my exes, if a project comes and if it's a good film, song or a web series, I won't give up the project and I am guessing that the other person will also not do so because we are pro-

professionals." He continued, "If the break up has not been on an ugly note, then what's the problem in working with that person again. Anything can happen." In an interview last week, Maera had said that she and Adhyayan broke up last year in November, after she began living with him and notice a change in

his personality. "Things failed to work out between us. I fell in love with a different man. Once I started living with him, I realised that he was quite different from what I had expected. There was also a communication gap. We barely spoke to each other for almost two months as I got busy

with the shoot of my TV show and he was shooting for his project. All I want to say at this point is that I am now averse to dating anyone associated with the industry," she told a leading daily. Adhyayan released his own statement, and said that he would prefer not to 'wash dirty linen in public'.

Five Foods That Shouldn't be Given to Toddlers

New Delhi, Mar 16: For toddlers in the 1-3 years age group, it is a vital period for growth after the end of the weaning period as they start consuming solid food. However, they still need full guidance from parents regarding what they should or shouldn't eat. Mentioned below are five foods that toddlers should never be allowed to eat.

Nuts & seeds: Children feel hungry all the time because their rapidly growing bodies need calories. They may want to try everything that they see their parents/elders consume, without knowing what is safe for them. Nuts are unsafe for children as they pose the risk of choking them. Babies don't have developed teeth and won't be able to chew the nuts or seeds them. Their oesophagus is also thin and may cause fatal blockages.

Spicy & oily foods: While it is advisable to gradually add spices to a child's food to provide them with the antioxidants, dishes that contain a lot of spices, chillies or are greasy is best avoided. They

might cause digestive upset, including heartburn and reflux.

Whole vegetables & fruits: Vegetables like carrots, fruits like grapes might cause choking hazards for babies. Finely chopped and boiled carrots, chopped grapes or other fruits that toddlers can easily swallow are ideal. In short, large chunks of foods should be avoided.

Chewing gum & candies: Most kids like candies and bubble gums. However, both of these confectionaries may cause choking and death in toddlers. Hence it is best to not keep such items lying about the house lest a child may feel tempted.

Fizzy soft drinks: They provide instant calories and are sweet; everything that children need. However, they are an unhealthy choice for not only babies but also adults. The bacteria in our tooth react with the high amount of sugar in fizzy drinks and produce acids that damage tooth enamel. Frequent consumption of soda pops also causes dental caries in children.

Sobhita Dhulipala stars in Dev Patel's debut directorial: What works for me is my love for risk-taking

New Delhi, Mar 16: The actor talks about working with Dev Patel last year, shooting for Monkey Man; adds she has her sights set on Hollywood. She has a Malayalam film, a Telugu-Hindi bilingual movie, a Tamil magnum opus, a Hindi film and the second season of an OTT show but that is not all for Sobhita Dhulipala, who is on a roll. "All these projects with acclaimed filmmakers and teams... I worked my lungs out for years to be worthy of these opportunities and now that I am here, I choose to pour my blood and soul into it," says the actor revealing that Hollywood was always on her mind. And, now, we have learnt that she is starring in the Hollywood actor, Dev Patel's debut directorial, Monkey Man. "I am happiest when I am creative and this is a very special and passionately made project, I feel thoroughly motivated to do well and conjure up the gold in every moment. As an actor, I think what works for me is my love for risk-taking," she exclaims. Talking about the project, Dhulipala reveals, "I had auditioned for it almost five years ago and I got a call back in a few days for a screen test with Dev. I remember, it was on the day I was leaving for the Cannes Film festival with my first



film Raman Raghav 2.0 (2016). All these years later and many turns in the journey of the film and our individual lives later, looks like we belonged with each other all along. What appealed to me about the project is that it's a collaborative spirit, a young and rather eccentric approach to the story and most certainly the people involved. I knew it would be special from the get go. I really enjoyed my character's tender dilemmas, they were as glamorous as sorrowful." With the pandemic last year, the Maid In Heaven actor shot for Monkey Man in Indonesia for four months. She states, it was "incredibly wholesome and introspective". She adds, "This is the closest I have been to

my own self, my family and my pursuits. I shot for Monkey Man during a global health crisis, which has its share of inconveniences but that aside, I didn't find my journey during the film particularly challenging or difficult. I enjoyed every second of the ride." With a number of Indian actors making their presence felt globally, ask her if expectations a concern and she replies? "It is the greatest era for potent crossovers in all fields, I am very inspired by the many hard workers who stand tall globally. I am too much of a wayfarer to feel bogged down by expectations on any front. It's a short, short life, you know? Gratitude and passion will light my path," she concludes.

SA Legends qualify for semis in Road Safety World Series T20



Raipur, Mar 16: South Africa Legends entered the semifinals of the Road Safety World Series T20 by beating Bangladesh Legends by 10 wickets here. Openers Andrew Puttick (84 not out off 54 balls; 9x4, 1x6) and Morne

van Wyk (69 not out off 62 balls; 9x4) slammed unbeaten half centuries as South Africa Legends chased down the 161-run target in 19.2 overs late on Monday. The win helped the South Africans finish third with

16 points after India (20 points) and Sri Lanka (20 points). Earlier, put in to bat, Bangladesh Legends displayed a much-improved batting performance before South Africa Legends bowlers triggered a collapse. The

Mohammed Rafique-led side were restricted to 160 for 9 in 20 overs with South Africa Legends offie Thandi Tshabalala and pacer Makhaya Ntini taking two wickets each. Nazimuddin provided a decent start with a

33-ball 32 with five fours and a six while Aftab Ahmed (39; 1x4, 3x6) and Hannan Sarkar (36; 2x4, 1x6) were the other main contributors. Nazimuddin, however, was dismissed by Tshabalala while Ahmed and Sarkar were sent back by Zander de Bruyn and seamer Garnett Krugger. Once Sarkar was dismissed at the team score of 130, Bangladesh lost six wickets for 30 runs. Brief Scores: Bangladesh Legends: 160/9 in 20 overs (Nazimuddin 32, Aftab Ahmed 39, Hannan Sarkar 36; Makhaya Ntini 2/26, Thandi Tshabalala 2/33) lost to South Africa Legends 161/0 in 19.2 overs (Andrew Puttick 84 not out, Morne van Wyk 69 not out) by 10 wickets.

London, Mar 16: West Indies cricket great Michael Holding, who came out in support of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement, has been named the 'Best Pundit' at the SJA British Sports Journalism Award 2020. Holding had delivered a powerful message against racism during last year's England-West Indies series, saying that blacks have been dehumanised and their accomplishments wiped off from a history "written by people who do the harm." The awards were hosted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "It is something that has been in me and in my head for many, many years," 'Sky Sports' quoted Holding as saying in his video acceptance speech.



"People don't understand what it is like to go through life and always thinking that people think less of you than what you think of yourself," he added. Asked if he thinks that 2020 will play a vital role in bringing about change in social and racial equality, Holding said: "I believe so and I hope so." "If you just look at the protests on the road and look at the faces of the

people that were on the road. I saw a Swedish women's football team take a knee before a game, so it is going all over the world that people are recognising that things need to be done, and it's about time it did." BLM gained momentum in the wake of African-American George Floyd's death at the hands of a white police officer in the USA in May last year.

Federation Cup Athletics 2021: Dhanalakshmi shocks Dutee Chand, Hima Das to win 100-m gold

New Delhi, Mar 16: Federation Cup Athletics 2021, 100 metre women's final: Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu pulled off an upset in the 100-metre women's final at the Federation Cup on Tuesday in a race that was headlined to have been a showdown between Dutee Chand and Hima Das. Clocking 11:39, Dhana Lakshmi pipped her more fancied opponents to win the gold in the final, while Dutee Chand was second with 11.58 seconds. Hima Das was disqualified

for a false start. Watch the race: The mark for earning an automatic place at the Tokyo Olympics was 11.15 seconds, a mark none of the women reached. After qualifying for the final in their respective heats on the opening day of the 24th Federation Cup senior athletics championships underway at the National Institute of Sports (NIS) Patiala, national record holder Dutee Chand had set her eyes set on the title as she took on Hima Das in the final of 100m race on Tuesday. While Dutee

clocked 11.51 seconds to win heats, Hima booked the final spot with a time of 11.63 seconds. Hima Das will also participate in the 200m. The five-day event will see several big names missing. The ones who will be in action, though, are expected to finetune their performances instead of going all-out for an attempted qualification. Neeraj Chopra, who has not only already qualified but also bettered his own national record a fortnight ago during the Indian Grand Prix, will again be in the spotlight.

Sreeshankar breaches Olympic qualification mark, sets new national record

New Delhi, Mar 16: Sreeshankar broke his own long jump national record and qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with a 8.26-metre leap at the Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships on Tuesday. The qualifying mark for the Olympics was 8.22m. Sreeshankar's previous best had been 8.20m. That's a ticket for #Tokyo2020 for Murli Sreeshankar in that pic. Sree jumped 8.26m in his 5th attempt & improved his own National Record! Prev. record 8.20m Well done champ! @SonySportsIndia pic.twitter.com/WSgBuWp6hs — Athletics Federation of India (@afiindia) March 16, 2021 He began with a 8.02m jump before improving to 8.04m, 8.07m and 8.09m in his next three jumps before touching



8.26m in his fifth attempt. He had a no mark (NM) in his final jump. Another Kerala jumper Muhammed Anees Yahya (8m) and S Lokesh (7.60m) of Karnataka took the silver and bronze respectively. Five race walkers (KT Irfan, Sandeep Kumar and Rahul Rohilla in men's 20km event and Bhawana Jat and Priyanka Goswami in women's 20km event), two javelin throwers (Neeraj Chopra and Shivpal

Singh), Avinash Sable (men's 3000m steeplechase) and the mixed 4x400m relay team have earlier qualified for the Tokyo Olympics. National record holder Dutee Chand was beaten to second place by S Dhanalakshmi, while Hima Das was disqualified after a false start in a much-anticipated women's 100m sprint final. The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu took the gold by clocking 11.39 seconds

ahead of Dutee (11.58) of Odisha to become the fastest woman of the championships on the second day of competitions at the NIS Campus. Another Tamil Nadu runner Archana Suseendran was third in 11.76. This was after Hima, who was running in the shorter sprint races of 100m and 200m instead of her per event 400m, was disqualified after a false start. The much-anticipated final did not live up to the

expectations as Hima was shown the red card, while Dutee and Dhanalakshmi did not come anywhere near the Olympic qualification mark of 11.15 seconds. Gurindervir Singh of Punjab won the men's 100m final in 10.32 seconds, while Elakkiyadasan Kannada of Tamil Nadu (10.43) and Maharashtra's Satish Krishnakumar (10.56) were second and third respectively. National record holder Amiya Kumar Mallick of Odisha finished seventh with a time of 10.75. Veteran M R Poovamma, representing Karnataka, took the gold in women's 400m, winning the final race in 53.57 seconds. Tamil Nadu's Subha Venkatesan (54.48) and Kiran Pahal of Haryana took the silver and bronze respectively.



Work in progress: Annu Rani rewrites national mark but feels she's yet far from her best

Patiala, Mar 16: Even before the first throw in the women's javelin final at the Federation Cup, it was a foregone conclusion that Annu Rani would take home the gold. The only question that mattered was if she could clear the 64m Olympic qualification mark. On Monday, at the competition in Patiala, the Uttar Pradesh athlete's third and best throw measured 63.24m. The Olympic berth was still 76cm away, but she did rewrite her own national record for a staggering eighth time in her career. The 28-year-old first broke the national mark in 2014 with a 58.83m throw and has since been rated the finest women's javelin thrower the country has produced. Her latest mark is a notable improvement on the 62.43m she set in

2019. Such is the gulf between Annu and rest of her competitors that, on Monday, the next two throwers to finish on the podium, Sajana Chaudhary and Shamila Kumari, managed a distant 54.55m and 50.78m respectively as their best throws on the day. The gold was comfortably bagged, but she still feels the need to "work on her technique" to add the distance

to secure a ticket to Tokyo. And she's confident of doing so. "This is just another national record, I will break it again soon and eventually qualify for the Games," she said flatly after setting the new record. "It is a step by step process and nothing happens overnight. In the last year or so I have been working a lot on my technique and there are still a lot of areas to improve on."

'Not explosive enough' Dr Klaus Bartonietz, a German biomechanics expert who works with national campers along with chief javelin coach Uwe Hohn, echoes Annu's views. He was closely monitoring her throws and admitted he was not impressed. "She needs to add more pace to her run-up. Annu needs to come into an active impulse stride (second last step be-

fore the throw is made) to come into a good throwing position," he explains. "Her arm is going deep, making the javelin tilt up. It has to be corrected—the arm up and the javelin down. The javelin should ideally be around the eye level." The seasoned thrower was cheered on by fellow-campers, including the men's champion thrower Neeraj Chopra, at the National Institute of Sports. Just like her peers though, Annu's training was hampered severely by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown. "We athletes are used to a very active lifestyle and the lockdown felt very uncomfortable. From training seven hours a day to being holed inside a room was frustrating," she says. "Now that the things have

eased I will be working on improving my distance at the upcoming meets in May." The Meerut-native hasn't visited home for over a year. But her family has done its own bit to ensure any degree of homesickness is quelled by at least one member of the household making the trip to attend her domestic events. Her elder brother made the trip to the Federation Cup. "My family says they are my lucky charm," she adds lightly. "Whenever they come I break a national mark." The one family member who may cause her distress—because of her performance—is her father. By her own admission, he's often harder to please than her coaches. "He said 'it's good you rewrote the national mark again,'" Annu describes the post-event phone call on Monday.

PV Sindhu and Co. chase elusive title at All England Championships

New Delhi, Mar 16: World champion PV Sindhu will look to shrug off her demoralising Swiss Open final defeat and take advantage of a depleted field when she spearheads India's challenge at the prestigious All England Open Badminton Championships, beginning in Birmingham on Wednesday. Sindhu looked a pale shadow of herself in her defeat against Carolina Marin, going down without much fight as she struggled to contain errors. Carolina, the three-time world champion from Spain, though has pulled out of the prestigious tournament due to an injury, taking some shine off of the event. Also missing in action will be the Chinese,



Koreans and Chinese Taipei shuttlers, who decided not to compete in the Super 1000 event as it is not part of the Tokyo Olympic qualification period. It affects the quality of the competition but also provides the 19-member Indian contingent an opportunity to go deep in the draw and recapture the trophy which has been won by just two Indians so far—the legendary Prakash Padukone (1980) and P Gopichand (2001).



Apollo Hospitals, India is first in Asia to perform four back-to-back MitraClip procedures in a day

(A.O. Bureau)
Chennai, Mar 16: The Apollo Hospitals group, Asia's largest and most trusted healthcare group, notched up yet another record milestone with the successful completion of four back-to-back MitraClip procedures in one day. The MitraClip implants were carried out on four patients suffering from severe heart failure on the same day, surpassing Japan where MitraClip procedures were performed on three patients in a day. The four back-to-back MitraClip procedures were performed at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai by Dr Sai Satish, Senior Interventional Cardiologist. The minimally invasive method used in MitraClip therapy allows repair of a leaking mitral valve without open heart surgery, and is a lifesaver for patients at high surgical risk. All four patients, the oldest of whom was 87 years old, went home walking within 3 days and are currently doing well. Dr Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group said, "It is indeed a matter of pride that our surgeons are achieving milestones that are a first in the Asian continent. At Apollo Hospitals, we have always endeavoured to ensure that we offer healthcare solutions for all patients who come to us. With the MitraClip, we are able to treat patients with severe mitral regurgitation who are at prohibitive surgical risk and offer them a second lease of life. To date, over 100,000 patients in more than 50 countries have undergone the



MitraClip procedure. We are proud that Apollo Hospitals is among the select few hospitals in India that is accredited to perform the MitraClip procedure for these heart failure patients. I am sure that our physicians and surgeons will not rest on their laurels and will continue to create new milestones using the best of medical technology that is available for them to use for benefit of our patients." Ms. Suneeta Reddy, Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group said, "Heart failure is a leading cause of death worldwide. Studies also indicate an alarming burden of heart failure in India with a staggering prevalence of about 4.6 million patients with heart failure in India. Keeping with our industry leading initiatives of bringing the best and latest in medical technology for the benefit of patients in India, we introduced MitraClip for the treatment of patients with mitral valve leaks, a condition that has very little avenue of treatment, especially for the elderly in their 80s. Among the first patients successfully treated with MitraClip

was an 88-year-old patient." MitraClip is a revolutionary device that was introduced in the country just three years ago and provides a non-surgical alternative to treat patients with mitral valve leaks (mitral regurgitation), which can lead to cardiac failure. The non-surgical method avoids open-heart surgery and instead approaches the heart through a catheter inserted through a vein in the thigh. The MitraClip is delivered to the heart using the catheter under real time 3D Echocardiographic & fluoroscopic guidance. Dr. Sai Satish, Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Apollo Hospitals said, "We have been performing MitraClip procedures for about three years now. It was the confidence gained through our extensive experience that enabled us to perform back-to-back MitraClip implants in four very sick patients in just one day. In fact, while the original plan was to only operate on 2 patients that day, the other 2 decompensated rapidly and needed immediate attention as well. With the sup-

port of an experienced team working seamlessly in tandem, we were able to successfully complete the four back-to-back MitraClip procedures like clockwork. This success has boosted the confidence of the entire team at Apollo Hospitals." Dr. Sai Satish has consistently led in performing procedures on the mitral valve with the highest number of MitraClip implants in the country, having performed over 60% of India's cases ever since its introduction in the country. He added, "Especially for the frail & elderly, there is very little avenue for conventional mitral valve surgery. The MitraClip is the only percutaneous (done through the skin) technology effective in both functional and degenerative mitral regurgitation. The procedure is performed percutaneously in a cath lab and the device is removable and repositionable. These important attributes contribute to the safety of this procedure. For a properly selected patient who is at high surgical risk, MitraClip is actually economical in the long run as repeat hospitalisations are avoided. More important

however, is the fact that the patient gets a new lease of life by regaining his or her quality of life and by being able to pursue an active normal lifestyle once again." Apollo Hospitals is also developing the Echo Connect Project that will allow scaling up of this program to detect leaking mitral valves at a nationwide level. Dr. Sai Satish working with Prof. K Chandrashekar, Sr. Consultant Cardiologist Apollo Hospitals, Chennai envisages the Echo Connect Project to enable specialists in Chennai to provide an expert opinion on echocardiography conducted across the country, detect a defective mitral valve and refer them to the apex center at Apollo Chennai for this life-saving MitraClip procedure. Apollo Hospitals is at the forefront of making the MitraClip's technological breakthrough available for patients as it becomes the standard of care for patients with heart failure with moderate to severe or severe primary & secondary mitral regurgitation who are not improving on medical treatment.

L&T Construction Awarded (Significant*) Contracts for its Various Businesses

(A.O. Bureau)
Mumbai, Mar 16: The construction arm of L&T has secured orders from its prestigious client for two businesses. Water & Effluent Treatment Business: The Water & Effluent Treatment Business of L&T Construction has secured EPC orders from the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Odisha to execute individual Rural Water Supply Projects in the Kendrapada & Khorda Districts of Odisha. The scope of work includes design & construction of Intake structures, 4 Water Treatment Plants of a cumulative capacity of 105 MLD, supplying and laying transmission

and distribution pipelines, overhead service reservoirs, a booster pumping station, house service connections and associated electromechanical & instrumentation works including measuring the input & output of the quantity and quality of water at each level. The projects will provide drinking water to 12.28 Lakh people across 780 villages in Kendrapada & Khorda Districts of Odisha. The business is already executing several other rural water supply projects for the same client. The business has also secured a repeat order from the Water Resources Department of Odisha to construct an intake structure and pressure main along the

right bank of Bargarh Main Canal of the Gangadhar Mehar Lift Irrigation Project in Bijepur, Odisha on EPC-TurnKey basis. The scope includes design & construction of an intake structure, pump house, pressure main of length 34 Km and associated electromechanical & instrumentation works. Building & Factories Business: The factories arm of Buildings & Factories Business has secured an order from a leading Cement Manufacturer in India to construct a 10000 TPD Integrated Cement Plant in Pali, Rajasthan. The scope involves Civil, Mechanical and Equipment Installation works.

A Conversation On Climate Change With Odia Filmmaker

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: The UK's GREAT for Sustainable Future campaign recently featured eminent environmental filmmaker from Odisha, Dr. Nila Madhab Panda. In that video, Dr. Panda talked about the impact of climate change and how it affects people at the grassroots. The British Deputy High Commissioner to Kolkata, Mr. Nick Low spoke to Dr. Panda in a virtual call today to talk about climate change and how the UK is working with partners in India ahead of COP26. In the online conversation, Mr. Low shared that as the COP26 Presidency,



the UK will take the lead in supporting a clean, inclusive and resilient recovery building on the principles of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. The UK will work to ensure that the linked challenges of public health, climate change and biodiversity are addressed, he said.

Nick Low, British Deputy High Commissioner to Kolkata, said: "We are at a turning point for our planet. As we recover from COVID-19, we have a unique and priceless opportunity to build a cleaner, greener, more resilient and more prosperous world. The window to do so is closing.

Vedanta spreads message of safety at workplace during 50th National Safety Week

(A.O. Bureau)
Bhubaneswar, Mar 16: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium and value-added products, observed the 50th National Safety Week from 4th - 10th March at its alumina refinery at Lanjigarh, and aluminium & power operations at Jharsuguda, in Odisha. As part of the commemoration, various activities like awareness campaigns, quizzes and interactive sessions with employees and business partners were conducted in line with this year's National Safety Day theme 'Learn from disaster and prepare for a safer future' to reinstate and reinforce the principles, rules and regulations of safety at the workplace. During the National Safety Week, the company also launched an e-Learning CHES [Consolidated Health, Environment, Safety and Sustainability (HSE&S)] module for the leadership, covering

the different aspects of the HSE&S functions. Takeaways from this module will be further imparted to other employees and business partners and practised in Vedanta's day to day operations. Reiterating Vedanta's safety practices and standards, Mr. Rahul Sharma, Dy. CEO Aluminium Business, Vedanta Ltd., said, "Vedanta puts in global best practices and rigorous processes to make its world-class operations safe for employees and business partners. In our mission to become the world's best in aluminium, we are committed to deploying cutting edge technology and adopting best-in-class global practices, aligned with our culture of care, to create a safer and responsible workplace for our people." Vedanta is extensively working towards creating a safe workplace for its employees and business partners by



bolstering its performance in safety, health and environment, while driving steady enhancement in its Safety Management System. Mr. Sandip Kumar, Site In charge - JCPL, Vedanta's business partner for operation and maintenance of the Bauxite Handling Unit of Vedanta, Lanjigarh, says, "Vedanta consistently tries to streamline and enhance safety performance within and beyond the plant premises contributing towards their adage of Zero Harm. The company has incorporated advanced safety initiatives and digital interventions for efficient

safety management to foster a culture of care for all stakeholders. Throughout the year, they make regular and robust efforts to share knowledge and update every person associated with them on safety standards and best practices." For integrating advanced policies, management systems and best-in-class practices to create safety-focused operations based on the three primary pillars Zero Harm, Zero Waste and Zero Discharge, Vedanta has bagged many accolades such as APEX INDIA Green Leaf Award, CII's 16th En-

vironment, Health & Safety Award, Greentech Safety and Sustainability award, and Kalinga Safety Excellence award over the years. Some of its best practices, highlights and notable initiatives in the safety domain are: Vedanta has instituted the Vedanta Sustainability Assurance Programme (VSAP), a robust governance system following International Finance Corporation (IFC) & International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) guidelines that guide its operations and measures performance across 34 elements, with safety

as a core dimension. It has institutionalized Visible Felt Leadership, where the leadership teams of various units are tasked with observing and assessing the safety of employees and business partners at work through regular visits and interactions at shopfloors. "At its Jharsuguda operations, the company has launched the Safety Booster Program that aims to overcome safety gaps arising out of cultural and behaviour issues, and inculcate a culture of safety through coaching, counselling, monitoring and feedback on

safety behaviour. Vedanta has formed an all-women fire-fighting team 'Agnivahini' at Jharsuguda, who have been meticulously trained to act effectively and efficiently in emergency situations. At Jharsuguda operations, robust Safety MIP (Management in Place) allows it to deploy personnel with the required safety skillset, knowledge and attitude at the right place within the safety structure, making safety a shared responsibility. Additionally, it also has Safety Scorecards for leadership & business partners that link performance with safety at the site. At the alumina refinery in Lanjigarh, the company has digitalized various aspects of safety like deployment of Leadership-Safety Interaction Portal, to ensure strict adherence to safety across all levels. At regular intervals, both units conduct Safety

Stand Down, a programme wherein leadership teams engage with employees and business partners on various facets of health, safety and environment, to build a holistic safety-first culture. Vedanta Aluminium & Power, a part of Vedanta Limited, is India's largest producer of aluminium, producing almost half of India's aluminium or 1.9 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) in FY20, and is also one of the largest private power producers in the country. It is a leader in value-added aluminium products that find critical applications in core industries. With its world-class smelters, power plants and alumina refinery spread across India, the company fulfils its mission of spurring emerging applications of aluminium as the 'Metal of the Future' for a greener tomorrow.