

Lulu Mohapatra's 58th birth anniversary observed

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Rich tributes were paid to senior Con-

worker Amiya Kanta Das. The event in Bhubaneswar was in-

of students and youths. Senior journalists, social



gress leader late Lalatendu Bidyadhar Mohapatra, popularly known as Lulu Mohapatra, on the occasion of his 58th birth anniversary on Monday. Blood donation camps were organised across the State by Mohapatra's close friend, entrepreneur and social

augurated by former MLA Debashish Samantaray at the Institution of Engineers. While remembering the leader, Das said that Mohapatra was a charismatic leader and popular among the youths across Odisha. He always fought for the rights

workers and educationists from different parts of Odisha were felicitated for their contribution to the society. Several volunteers participated in the blood donation camps and more than 1,000 units were collected across the State.

Resentment brews over draft voters list for BMC limits

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Resentment is brewing among voters in the State Capital over the alleged discrep-

(ULB) elections. A total of 7,27,456 eligible voters have been identified in all 67 wards of the Capi-

well as former corporators including a few from the ruling BJD, alleged that the voters' names of one ward have figured in another ward at many places in all three zones of the Capital. Names of a number of voters from Ward 64 figure in Wards 65, 66 and other nearby wards, alleged a former corporator on the condition of anonymity. He said that Ward 29 which had around 12,000 voters in the previous urban polls, now has



ancy in draft voters list prepared by the office of additional district magistrate and the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) for the urban local body

tal city based on the electoral roll issued by the Election Commission with January 1 as the qualifying date.

However, citizens as

PM Modi to deliver inaugural address at TERI's World Sustainable Development Summit on February 16

NEW DELHI (KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address at The

Planet: Ensuring a Sustainable and Equitable Future." World Sustainable Development Sum-



Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) World Sustainable Development Summit on February 16 at around 6 pm virtually.

The theme for this year's Summit is "Towards a Resilient

mit is TERI's annual flagship event.

The Summit will discuss a wide range of issues including climate change, sustainable production, energy transitions, global commons and re-

Punjab polls: Priyanka Gandhi rides tractor; calls BJP & AAP 'two sides of same coin'

CHANDIGARH(KCN): Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday campaigned for party candidates in Punjab and said like the BJP earlier propagated 'Gujarat model', AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal was



publicising his 'Delhi model', which she said was also a 'failure'.

Riding a tractor with Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi in Rupnagar district as part of her "Jansampark Abhiyan", Gandhi, who later addressed a gathering, also dubbed the BJP and AAP "two sides of the same coin". She added that both AAP and BJP are promising a new brand of politics to befool the public. Claiming that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) "emerged" from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), she said it has an ideology similar to that of the BJP. CONTINUED ON: P-7



Thousands of workers from other parties joining BJD in the presence of General Secretary (Organization) and Jajpur MLA Sri Pranab Prakash Das at a Election Campaign Meeting in Malkangiri District

No vax, RT-PCR report for Srimandir entry from Feb 21

PURI(KCN): Beginning February 21, devotees will be able to enter Sri Jagannath Temple without producing any document. For the first time since the Covid outbreak, neither complete vaccination nor RT-PCR negative certificate would be necessitated for entry. The decision was taken at a meeting of Chhattisha Nijog, the confederation of servitors' bodies of Srimandir and the shrine's nitee sub-committee held here on Monday.

"The mandatory provision of furnishing complete vaccination certificate or RT-PCR negative test report at the kiosk before entering the temple has been waived," said chief administrator of Sri Jagannath Temple Administration

Krishan Kumar. Since Covid-19 cases have gone down significantly and most people are vaccinated, the administration has lifted the re-

taken in the next meeting of the shrine administration. Earlier, the Chhattisha Nijog decided to take up the matter of lifting the

Samarth Verma and discussed the issue. The delegation, comprising mostly elderly women, said local devotees and servitors' families used to

tees to have darshan of deities during 'mangal arati' and permit entry into the shrine from all its four gates.

Meanwhile, details of President Ramnath Kovind's visit to the 12th century shrine were also finalised in the meeting. The President will be received by Gajapati Maharaj Dibyasingh Deb, Chhattisha Nijog chief Janardan Pattajoshimahapatra and Kumar on his arrival at the temple gate and escorted into temple amid tight security. General devotees will be prohibited from entering the shrine an hour before the President's visit. The President and the first lady will be guided into the sanctum sanctorum (garbhagruha) of the temple where they will spend around 40 minutes.



strictions. However, devotees must take precautions like wearing masks and sanitising hands before entering the temple, he said. A decision on entry of devotees, especially locals, into the shrine for witnessing 'mangal arati' will be

restrictions with administration as devotees have been deprived of 'mangal arati' for the last two years as the temple opens only after 6 am after the ritual is over. A delegation led by senior servitor Jambeswar Mahasuar had met Collector

witness 'mangal arati' of the deities as a matter of habit because the first ritual of the day is considered auspicious.

On Friday, a group of lawyers from the local bar association had urged the Collector to ease the restrictions to enable devo-

Will rift in BJD pave way for Congress, BJP?

JAGATSINGHPUR (KCN): With the stage set for the panchayat elections

levels. While BJD had a thumping victory in the last panchayat

Raghunathpur, Kujang and Biridi blocks. Here, two rival groups have

This apart, allegations on rise in corruption at the grassroots, sub-standard development works and the recent JSW protests in Dhinkia have impacted public opinion to the BJD's disadvantage. Political observers feel, given the current situation, it would be a cake walk for either the BJP or the Congress to take mileage and capture maximum votes.

On the other hand, Opposition parties too have their share of drawbacks. While Congress is grappling with poor leadership, inadequate funds, ab-



from February 16, speculations are rife on whether the Congress and BJP can cash in on the intra-party rift in the BJD to win seats at Zilla Parishad (ZP), sapanch and samiti

elections, this time things are not the same. Sources say, factionalism within the ruling party has reared its ugly head in Tirtol, Naugaon, Jagatsinghpur, Balikuda, Erasama,

emerged in most panchayats due to conflict between local MLAs and their rivals leading to a tough fight between party-supported nominees and BJD rebel candidates.

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Early Completion of 60 Years Long Awaited Talcher- Bimlagarh Rail Project

Rourkela (KCN): Core Member TBRAC (Talcher Bimlagarh Rail Action Committee) and Social Activist Bimal Kumar Bisi writes to Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnav



and by referring to earlier communication with him in the same regard dated Jan 18, he said that Talcher Bimlagarh New Line Railway project has gained special status as first time the project has been sanctioned a budget of Rs250 Crores by the Ministry of Railways. Enthusiasm and support of the common people of the region is growing as their expectations appear to be fulfilled in real time. Gone are the days when the Railway projects stayed dormant for years together or got frequently stalled due to erratic flow of funds. The sources monitoring the project see a sea change in the project environmental framework as the traditional neglect and apathy has been replaced by regular monitoring and effective interventions at all levels both by the Rail Ministry as well as by the Government of Odisha. However, bottlenecks created by a few private opportunists who want to get more and more from the "Opportunity" of land transfer to Project has led to litigations for higher compensation in the Keshabpur and Bilinda Villages. These opportunists have put their personal interests above the regional and National interests and ensured that the Stays by Hon'ble High Court are allowed to continue since 2013. It is only a misfortune of the silent majority that the Law of the land is such that it takes thousands of people working round the clock to commission a Railway

project but it takes only one unscrupulous person to stall the same. Already about Rs950Crores has been spent on the project without any revenue return due to project stalling and the direct outcome is that the Nation is suffering a Loss of Interest of about 95 Crores per annum. Same is the situation with almost all Railway projects requiring Land acquisition. The cost of Stay that the Indian citizenry pays in form of inflation created by investments incurred on stalled projects is enormous and crippling. However, to counter such individuals who are not hesitant of stalling the National project on grounds of frivolous litigation, Railway is addressing the issue with new strategies. The first is to file complaints about such unauthorised occupants with Railway Estate Officers who are Quasi-Judicial authorities and shall initiate the evictions under PPE Act 1971. The Eviction under PPE Act 1971 is faster as there is Bar of Jurisdiction of Courts under CI 15 of the said Act. Moreover, an estate officer, for the purpose of holding any inquiry under this Act, have the same powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908) when trying a suit in respect of the following matters, namely:— (a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him on oath; (b) requiring the discovery and production of documents; (c) any other matter which may be prescribed. The Positive development in the Mega Infra Project Environment is that even Hon'ble Supreme Court of India is now taking Pro-Development perspective on National Infrastructure projects. National Infrastructure development and appreciation of larger societal interests is gaining ground as was seen in the Landmark judgement in Vizhingam Port Case. Chief Justice of India TS Thakur told lawyers arguing on behalf of fishermen in the Vizhingam port case. "If it is a project of national importance, being set up for the benefit of the country, it should not be stopped for some fishermen. You may drop names such as Adani... but we won't allow you to stop such projects for a few hundred fishermen," Railways directly as well as through the Estate Officer will bring the above facts in the knowledge of Hon'ble High Court Cuttack and plead for permitting the project works on the encroached lands as well as

implementation of the eviction process. It is hoped that once the Hon'ble High Court is apprised of the gravity of the situation, Railway should be able to obtain order to continue the project work notwithstanding the issue of higher compensation which shall get decided in due course of time. Bisi said that a meeting held between the Collector/Anugul and Railway Project officials on 9th February is also reported to be fruitful as the Collector S.S Swain, IAS, assured the Project Officials that the Government will intervene to see that the National Infrastructure Project works are not stalled by unauthorized occupants. New approach has also been adopted in project scheduling and analysis also. The project constraints have been analysed in detail using WBS based MS Project scheduling software and it was found that for the Sunakhani-Samal-Parabil block section the land issues and court cases in Keshabpur and Bilinda continue to be the major bottleneck. As the contracts pertaining to these affected locations had to be short closed due to uncertainties caused by Non availability of working space, full exercise of finalization of fresh contracts shall be taken up again once the land issues are resolved. This may shift the Sunakhani-Samal-Parabil commissioning target from March 2022 to beyond September 2022 with current task load. Similarly, the Parabil-Khamar block section which is targeted for commissioning in Jan 2023 is affected by land issues at 12 locations. Beyond KhamaruptoBimlagarh, the project has yet not taken off due to no private land acquisition. About 139 Acre of Government land in Sundergarh district is under acquisition for which a Team of Railway Project Officials is camping in Sundergarh district to expedite the process of taking over. However, no work can be started from Bimalagarh side for quite some time because till such time private land patches are acquired there will not be any continuity in the New Line. Bisi said that It is hoped that with new drive and enthusiasm, land will be acquired in all the three districts viz Anugul, Deogarh and Sundergarh and the project will get a fresh momentum. Bisi said Hope and positive thinking change the world and move the mountains but reflecting on Nine long years of litigation Paralyzing the National

Infrastructure development project what comes to mind is famous Gazal of Urdu Shayar Rana Sahari: Manzil Na De, Charag Na De, Hausla To De, Tinke Ka Hi Sahi, Tu Magar Aasra To De, Maine Ye Kab Kaha Ke, Mere Haq Mein Ho Jawab, Lekin Khamosh Kyun Hai Tu, Koi Faisla To De. Railway is earning approx Rs.20,000 Crores of revenue per annum from Odisha. In last 7 years Railway has earned approx 1,40,000 Crores from Odisha, But Odisha got back about 20,000 Crores only in last 7 years. NB- India: Railway Route Length - 67,956 Kms, Running Track Length - 99,235 Kms, Total Trackage - 1,26,366 Kms. In Comparison to the above Odisha has only 2,650 Route Kms & Running Track is 4,400 Kms. In the state, There is 15Km Railway in average of 100 Sq.Kms, whereas in India this average is 19Kms. In comparison to our neighbouring states ie- Bihar, West Bengal & Andhra Pradesh, We have much less rail connectivity. Unfortunately, Due to lack of interest showing by Govt. Of Odisha, the project is getting delayed. Acquisition of Govt & Forest land already given clearance for construction. Present status of Land acquisition of private land of all the 3 districts as appended 1. Angul District - 138 Acres- 19 Villages, 2. Deogarh District- 192 Acres - 19 Villages, 3. Sundergarh District- 248 Acres- 29 Villages. All the above private lands acquisition yet to be completed, though Railways has already deposited Rs. 300 crores with Govt. Of Odisha for the same. The total project cost is about 1900 Crores, till date only 800 Crores has been spent in this project. Talcher- Bimlagarh Rail Link Action Committee members comprising Harihar Routray, Bishnu Mohanty, Laxman Munda, MLA, Bonai, Ramesh Bal and Bimal Kumar Bisi has given several memorandums to Chief Minister of Odisha & Minister for Railways, Govt. Of India for the above mentioned issue. Bimal Bisi, on behalf of TBRAC and people of western Odisha requested to kindly intervene personally and take necessary appropriate steps for completion of this much awaited (About 60 Years) long within 4 to 5 years which could be achieved if land acquisition by state government initiated from Bimlagarh side with a targeted deadline of 31 Mar 2022. Bimal Bisi sent this pleading copies to Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

CDMO, Khordha Condoles Death of Renowned Pediatrician Prof. Dr. Trailokya Nath Panda



Khordha (KCN): Odisha renowned pediatrician Prof. Dr. Trailokya Nath Panda passed away in his residence at Chintamani Swar, Bhubaneswar, at the age of 84 years. Late Prof. Panda was the

Ex-HOD, of pediatric department and also the Superintendent of VSS, Medical College, Burla. He was founder President of IAP Khordha District Branch in 2001. He was past president of IAP Odisha State

Branch. He was also popular pediatrician of western Odisha. The CDMO, Khordha Dr. Arta Bandhu Nayak condoled the death of Prof. Dr. Trailokya Nath Panda. In his Condolence message

Dr. Nayak said "Prof. Dr. Panda was my teacher in medical college. He stamped his footprint in the medical field with his hard work and talent. I express my Condolences to his family members.

Tribute to eminent social worker Dhanajay Mohanty by DPBP

Cuttack Sadar 31st sradha at Khatua, Upendra Routray, Nisikanta (KCN): Cuttack Pujujapuja bhavan Barik, Utkal Yadav Sad, Rama Sankar Sadar 42 Mouza Patana. The meeting Mahasabha office



leading social organization Dayanidhi Pratiba Bikash Pratistatan (DPBP) observed eminent social worker, ex-MLA, MP, good speaker late Dhanajay Mohanty's

was presiding by Pradyapak Dr. Kalimulla with presence of guest Poet Saroja Nalini Parija, Cultural Secretary Rudra Narayan Das, social worker Pravat

secretary writer Bulai Behera, Suwendu Baran Das Mohapatra, Srabantika Mohanty, Rama Chandra Khuntia, Madhab Parida, Kuna Mallik, Purnachandra

Tarai and all. Lastly General secretary Narayan Chandra Monday given thanks to all for their presence and celebration of sradha utsav.

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Madhavan: I have never been conscious of my image

In the melting pot of Indian cinema, the crossing over of talent between various industries has always

reimagined the concept to suit the actors in the Tamil version, while maintaining the essence of Charlie.

tied down by, say, cellphones? Many a time, in a relationship, it is not just about the sights and



been happening. While women actors have straddled cinema across languages with ease, it hasn't quite been the case with our male stars, even with the likes of Rajinikanth. Arguably, the exception in this trend is Madhavan, who has been successful across languages for a couple of decades now. "When I decided to do OTT, I didn't care whether people would tag me as 'a not-so-big actor'. When I decided to act in 3 Idiots, I didn't care when people told me I could lose my Tamil market. When I did Anbe Sivam, they said my Hindi market could get affected, and again, I didn't care. I have never been image-conscious," says Madhavan, in a video interaction with the media over a Zoom call. What is it about Maara, the remake of Malayalam film, Charlie, that made you say yes to the project? This is more an adaptation of Charlie than a remake. We have

My favourite aspect of Charlie is its world. Similarly, Maara will feel like a breath of fresh air. It is a simple world with simple problems and simple solutions. These days, when we meet someone, we exchange numbers and relationships are developed only in the digital world. We deal with their online persona, but they may be a completely different person in real life. The relationship gets strained. In Maara, the lead character doesn't even have a cellphone; both main characters judge each other by their real-life actions. Considering that they don't meet for a long time in the film, there is almost a cosmic connection between them. Also, both Shradha Srinath and I have a sort of vagabond-ish outlook to life. We feel it necessary to interact with people. So, in many ways, I share Maara's philosophies about life. Have you fantasised over how life would be if we were not all

sounds, but even something like, say, fragrance, that is important... All that is missing in this digital age. We don't look beyond our social media personas. I miss the 'getting to know' part. I'm not sure if I need this much information about people. Of course, issues like privacy etc... are there, but I miss discovering something novel about a person after meeting, conversing, and understanding them over a period of time. During Alaipayuthey, I remember waiting for a week for a review. There was a sense of anticipation, and there was joy in that wait. Now, we see reviews even before the first show. Our chemistry is key to this film because we have very limited scenes together. If that doesn't work out, then our relationship in this film sinks. In all my films, utmost importance is given to women characters; I only enjoy such stories. I come from a family of strong, pow-

erful and independent women. Alaipayuthey, Minnale, Irudhi Suttru, Vikram Vedha... all the wives, lovers in these films have been strong characters. There are no scenes where they fall on my feet... In fact, there has been just one film where I had to slap my heroine, and I still regret doing that scene. Shradha is a beautiful woman, a worldly-wise person. I enjoy working with professionals like her. There were quite a few hurdles when it came to the shooting of Maara... I hate to work simultaneously on many films because it isn't easy for me to slip in and out of characters. We started Maara before Rocketry, but after the first schedule of Maara, we weren't satisfied with what we had shot. We went back to the drawing

board and decided to reshoot the film. My career is a prime example that our lives are determined only by the decisions we make. I have done a lot of things that were considered wrong in Tamil cinema. In Hindi, they called me a Tamil actor. In Tamil, some called me a Hindi actor. But as I knew both languages well, and knew enough about the industries, it all worked out well for me. All the decisions I took were scary, but thankfully, everything fell into place. The result of my perseverance is that I'm in a position where I am forced to say no to almost three projects every day. You take time out to wish your fans on social media. You maintain a constant connection with them. Do you believe the exclusivity of a star is a

myth right now? Some of the biggest superstars of the world do this. Why does a Salman Khan or a Shah Rukh Khan need a Twitter account? Doing this is not just to show how good a person one is. People want to know if reel heroes are real-life heroes too. And you can't put up with this facade for too long because the audience will see right through it. If someone wants a birthday wish, it hardly takes me a few seconds to send out a tweet. But for them, that acknowledgment could give them a lifetime of happiness. It is a boon that God has given us artists. I am able to spread happiness with almost no effort. This world could do with a lot more happiness. We should be worthy of our devotees.

We still need to be extremely mindful of virus: Shilpa Shirodkar after receiving COVID vaccine

MUMBAI: Shilpa Shirodkar recently became the first Indian celebrity to receive COVID-19 vaccine but the actor believes that people must not become complacent and

hesitation about getting vaccinated as she has complete trust in science. "There were no concerns at all in my head. I spoke to my family, my sister (actor Namrata

nation at the centre. She revealed that her husband and daughter will receive their first dose of the vaccine next week. "I'm just another simple human, like any other who faced

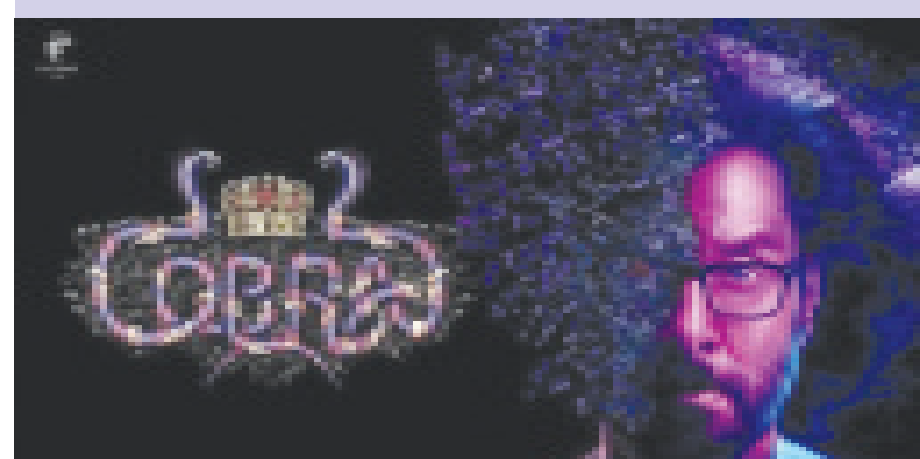


should continue wearing face masks to protect themselves from the virus. Shirodkar, known for starring in 1990s blockbuster such as "Kishen Kanhaiya", "Hum", "Khuda Gawah" and "Aankhen", had revealed on Thursday that she received the coronavirus vaccine in Dubai, where she has been living with her family for the past two years. The actor had shared a selfie on Instagram, in which she was seen wearing a mask with a small bandage on her upper arm. "Vaccinated and safe! The new normal...here I come 2021. Thank you, UAE," she had captioned the image. Talking to PTI, the 51-year-old actor said she received a jab of Sinopharm vaccine on Wednesday and will be getting her next dose after 21 days. Shirodkar asserted that she had no

Shirodkar) and they all encouraged me. We all have to get it someday. I have always been sure that I would get vaccinated once there would be clarity on it. I trust the system and I trust science," Shirodkar said. But despite getting the vaccine, the actor said she will still not let her guard down against COVID-19, which has claimed the lives of over 19 lakh people globally since it emerged in China in late 2019. She urged others to continue to follow the rules and regulations from the authorities. "I believe the masks are not going anywhere for a while. We have to be extremely mindful and protect ourselves from the virus," she added. Shirodkar said the vaccine rollout process in UAE is simple and well-organised as a person can just walk in and get the vacci-

troubles during the pandemic. Everyone must be a responsible citizen of the world. When the vaccine is made available they should go take it. Let's all fight this virus together," she said. Shirodkar also thanked the frontline health workers for keeping everyone safe and alive during the pandemic, and hopes that the year 2021 will bring everyone closer. In India, the drug regulator has approved Oxford vaccine Covishield, being manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country. The country is preparing for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and the second nationwide mock drill was conducted on Friday.

'Cobra' teaser: Vikram gives goosebumps with getups and maths



The teaser of Ajay Gnanmuthu's Cobra released on Saturday and viewers were taken in with a surprise with lead actor Vikram's physical transformation and many getups, which was initially perceived just as a 'promotion' strategy. The first look poster of the movie itself cited that 'maths' will be a major plot device in the movie. Going by the teaser, Vikram

apparently plays a maths teacher who has an alter ego 'Cobra', who is an international thief. Veteran cricketer Irfan Pathan, who is seen as an Interpol officer, is hinted to be the primary antagonist who chases Vikram's character. KGF-fame Srinidhi Shetty will be playing the lead actor's love interest and other cast members include Robo Shankar, direc-

tor KS Ravikumar and Malayalam actor Roshan Matthews and music is composed by AR Rahman. Earlier the action thriller was aiming for a May 2020 release when COVID-19 struck and the crew, which was shooting in Russia had to return with 25 per cent of production work left. However, shooting resumed last month.

The doctrine of rarest of rare case, mitigating and aggravating circumstances for the award of Death Sentence

On 8th February 2022 my article on "Constitutional Validity of Death Sentence" was published in this esteemed newspaper

"The Kalinga Chronicle". At the end of the said article I indicated that my next article would follow on "the rarest of rare case doctrine" and "mitigating and aggravating circumstances".

There are many landmark judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on the said issues. Before confirming or modifying the death sentence the Hon'ble Supreme Court has examined through its prudence in law and on the basis of both the doctrines. Before going to the said historic and landmark judgments, I would like to explain the substance of the doctrines "The rarest of rare case". As per the encyclopaedic law dictionary "Advanced Law Lexicon" rarest of rare means an incidence of a particular type of murder but rarest of rare bench mark can also be used in the context of other parameters such as brutality, planning, society's reaction et al. In this context, the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India may be referred i.e. *Swami Shraddananda Versus State of Karnataka (2007) 12 SCC 288*. In that case there was a conflict of opinion on the applicability of the doctrine of "The rarest of the rare case". Justice Katju emphatically categorized the said case as rarest of rare case clarifying that the accused being in a dominating position or position of trust committed murder of the woman for gains in a cold blooded, calculated, diabolical depraved, malevolent and most condemnable manner taking the advantage of the innocence of the victim. Ultimately the matter was referred to the larger bench. The larger bench finally decided to modify the death sentence to imprisonment till the end of his life reported in (2008) 13 SCC 767. In the said judgment the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India at para 49 held:

"49. In Alok Nath Dutta v. State of W.B. Sinha, J. gave some very good illustrations from a number of recent decisions in which on similar facts this Court took contrary views on giving death penalty to the convict (see SCC pp. 279-87, paras 151-78; Scale pp. 504-10, paras 154-82). He finally observed (SCC para 158) that "courts in the matter of sentencing act differently although the fact situation may appear to be somewhat similar" and further "it is evident that different Benches had taken different view in the matter" (SCC para 168). Katju, J. in his order passed in this appeal said that he did not agree with the decision in Alok Nath Dutta in that it held that death sentence was not to be awarded in a case of circumstantial evidence. Katju, J. may be right that there cannot be an absolute rule excluding death sentence in all cases of circumstantial evidence (though in Alok Nath Dutta it is said "normally" and not as an absolute rule). But there is no denying the illustrations cited by Sinha, J. which are a matter of fact."

In the case of *Prithvi Versus Mamraj & Ors., (2004) 13 SCC 279* the Hon'ble Supreme Court reduced the sentence of death to life imprisonment since the said case does not fall within the category of rarest of rare case. The Supreme Court before reversing the judgment of the High Court upheld the order of the Additional Sessions Judge, the punishment of death but modified the said sentence under Section 302 of the I.P.C. The relevant para 24 and 26 are reproduced as under:

"24. Considering the totality of the circumstances as evidenced from the record, we are satisfied that the reasoning of the High Court for acquitting the accused is wholly perverse; had there been a reasonable approach to the appreciation of evidence, there would have been no reason to interfere with the findings recorded by

the learned Additional Sessions Judge.

26. In the result, we maintain the convictions rendered against the accused Mam Raj, Jai Ram, Rameshwar and Bharta. We also maintain the sentences awarded to Jai Ram, Rameshwar and Bharta. With regard to Mam Raj, however, the sentence is reduced from one of death to life imprisonment under Section 302 IPC. The other sentences handed down to him are also maintained."

Clarifying the sentence under Section 302, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has categorically observed that the said case does not fall in the category of rarest of rare case. In the case of *Santosh Kumar Satish Bhushan Bariyar Versus State of Maharashtra (2009) 6 SCC 498*, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that hence the death penalty awarded by the courts below in the absence of any special reasons to support the same, modified the penalties of rigorous imprisonment for life. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in that case has also held that the principle of rarest of rare dictum does not come in the way of individualized sentencing with necessary room for sentencing, consistency has to be achieved in the manner in which the rarest of rare victim has to be applied by court. The case of *Bachan Singh* expressly barred one time enunciation of minute guidelines through a judicial verdict but at the same time, it actively relied on judicial precedent in disciplining sentencing discretion to repel the argument of arbitrariness and Article 14 the equality before law. An embargo on introduction of judicial guidelines was put therein but organic evolution of set of principles on sentencing through judicial pronouncement was not ruled out. Sentencing a discretion is also a kind of discretion and itself be exercised judicially in the light of the precedents and finally the Supreme Court modified the sentence of the death penalty to imprisonment for life since the said case does not fall within the ambit of rarest of rare case. In the case of *Machhi Singh Versus State of Punjab (1983) 3 SCR 413* the Hon'ble Supreme Court has considered as under:

- What normal guidelines are to be followed so as to identify "rarest of rare cases" formula for imposing death sentence as spelled out in *Bachan Singh Versus State of Punjab (1980) 2 SCR 864*?
- Reliability of eye witnesses to a crime under light shed by the lantern in a village to identify connect an accused to the crime.
- Invocation of the doctrine of benefit of doubt.
- The effect of non-summoning the Magistrate for recording dying declaration.

It is pertinent to mention here that how the Hon'ble Supreme Court has dealt *Machhi Singh* case on death sentence and settled the principles as under:

"(e) Death sentence: Having dealt with the appeals on merits from the stand-point of proof of guilt and validity or otherwise of the order of conviction, we now come face to face with the problem indicated when the curtain was lifted, namely, the application of the rarest-of-rare cases rule to the facts of individual cases in the context of the relevant guidelines. Some reflections on the question of death penalty may appropriately be made before we tackle the said question in the perspective of the present group of appeals.

The reasons why the community as a whole does not endorse the humanistic approach reflected in "death sentence-in-no-case" doctrine are not far to seek. In the first place, the very humanistic edifice is constructed on the foundation of "reverence for life" principle. When a member of the community violates this very principle by killing another member, the society may not feel itself bound

by the shackles of this doctrine. Secondly, it

has to be realized that every member of the community is able to live with safety without his or her own life being endangered because of the protective arm of the community and on account of the rule of law enforced by it. The very existence of the rule of law and the fear of being brought to book operates as a deterrent to those who have no scruples in killing others if it suits their ends. Every member of the community owes a debt to the community for this protection. When ingratitude is shown instead of gratitude by 'Killing' a member of the community which protects the murderer himself from being killed, or when the community feels that for the sake of self preservation the killer has to be killed, the community may well withdraw the protection by sanctioning the death penalty. But the community will not do so in every case. It may do so (in rarest of rare cases) when its collective conscience is so shocked that it will expect the holders of the judicial power centre to inflict death penalty irrespective of their personal opinion as regards desirability or otherwise of retaining death penalty. The community may entertain such a sentiment when the crime is viewed from the platform of the motive for, or the manner of commission of the crime, or the anti-social or abhorrent nature of the crime, such as for instance:

I. Manner of Commission of Murder

When the murder is committed in an extremely brutal, grotesque, diabolical, revolting, or dastardly manner so as to arouse intense and extreme indignation of the community. For instance,

- When the house of the victim is set aflame with the end in view to roast him alive in the house.
- When the victim is subjected to inhuman acts of torture or cruelty in order to bring about his or her death.
- When the body of the victim is cut into pieces or his body is dismembered in a fiendish manner.

II. Motive for Commission of murder

When the murder is committed for a motive which evince total depravity and meanness. For instance when (a) a hired assassin commits murder for the sake of money or reward (2) a cold blooded murder is committed with a deliberate design in order to inherit property or to gain control over property of a ward or a person under the control of the murderer or vis-à-vis whom the murderer is in a dominating position or in a position of trust. (c) a murder is committed in the course for betrayal of the motherland.

III. Anti-social or socially abhorrent nature of the crime

- When murder of a Scheduled Caste or minority community etc., is committed not for personal reasons but in circumstances which arouse social wrath. For instance when such a crime is committed in order to terrorize such persons and frighten them into fleeing from a place or in order to deprive them of, or make them with a view to reverse past injustices and in order to restore the social balance.
- In cases of 'bride burning' and what are known as 'dowry-deaths' or when murder is committed in order to remarry for the sake of extracting dowry once again or to marry another woman on account of infatuation.

IV. Magnitude of Crime

When the crime is enormous in proportion. For instance when multiple murders say of all or almost all the members of a family or a large number of persons of a particular caste, community, or locality, are committed.

V. Personality of Victim of murder

When the victim of murder is (a) an innocent child who could not have or has not provided even an excuse, much less a provocation, for murder, (b) a helpless woman or a person rendered helpless by

old age or infirmity (c) when the victim is a person vis-à-vis whom the murderer is in a position of domination or trust (d) when the victim is a public figure generally loved and respected by the community for the services rendered by him and the murder is committed for political or similar reasons other than personal reasons.

In this background the guidelines indicated in *Bachan Singh's* case (supra) will have to be culled out and applied to the facts of each individual case where the question of imposing of death sentences arises. The following propositions emerge from *Bachan Singh's* case:

- the extreme penalty of death need not be inflicted except in gravest cases of extreme culpability;
- Before opting for the death penalty the circumstances of the 'offender' also require to be taken into consideration alongwith the circumstances of the 'crime'.
- Life imprisonment is the rule and death sentence is an exception. In other words death sentence must be imposed only when life imprisonment appears to be an altogether inadequate punishment having regard to the relevant circumstances of the crime, and provided, and only provided the option to impose sentence of imprisonment for life cannot be conscientiously exercised having regard to the nature and circumstances of the crime and all the relevant circumstances.
- A balance sheet of aggravating and mitigating circumstances has to be drawn up and in doing so the mitigating circumstances has to be accorded full weightage and a just balance has to be struck between the aggravating and the mitigating circumstances before the option is exercised.

In order to apply these guidelines inter-alia the following questions may be asked and answered:

- Is there something uncommon about the crime which renders sentence of imprisonment for life inadequate and calls for a death sentence?
- Are the circumstances of the crime such that there is no alternative but to impose death sentence even after according maximum weightage to the mitigating circumstances which speak in favour of the offender?

If upon taking an overall global view of all the circumstances in the light of the aforesaid proposition and taking into account the answers to the questions posed here in above, the circumstances of the case are such that death sentence is warranted, the court would proceed to do so."

As per the Encyclopaedic Dictionary "Advanced Law Lexicon" mitigating circumstances are those which tend to disprove malice or to make less severe, violent, cruel, intends, painful and mitigation means diminution in degree, amount or severity; moderation; a reduction in punishment or penalty and aggravating circumstances are those which attend the commission of a crime or tort which increase its guilt or enormity or add to its injurious consequences. Therefore, the death sentence is awarded after examining magnitude of crime through the well settled doctrines such as "rarest of rare cases", "mitigating circumstances" and "aggravating circumstances" since nobody is born a criminal, it is circumstances which turn a person into a criminal.

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Campaign ends for Phase I

Bhubaneswar: The high-pitched campaign for the first phase of the three-tier panchayat elections on February 16 ended here on Monday evening.

As per the schedule, the first phase polling will be held on February 16 for 200 Zilla Parishad seats, 1,669 Sarpanch posts, 1,669 Samiti member seats and 22,379 Ward Member posts in 71 blocks of 30 districts.

A total of 67.51 lakh people will exercise their franchise, the SEC informed.

While polling parties have already left for the booths in 11 districts on Monday, another batch will reach the polling stations on Tuesday; the official said adding that the polling will be held between 7 Am and 1 PM this time. Earlier, the polling timing was between 7 AM



to 12 noon in 2017 general elections for the three tier panchayat elections.

Though all the MLAs, MPs and senior leaders of three major parties like BJD, BJP and Congress undertook campaigning in different parts of the state, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik did not campaign for his party candidates this time also.

Patnaik also did not campaign in the rural polls during 2017.

Similarly, OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik, who was infected with COVID-19 few days ago, also kept himself away from campaigning while BJP state president Samir Mohanty actively participated in the campaign.

East Coast Achieves 200MT Milestone

Bhubaneswar: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has achieved 200 MT milestone in loading during the current financial year, till February 14. According to official sources in ECoR, East Coast Railway has loaded 200.50MT of freight during April 1, 2021 to February 14, 2022 as against 173.82 MT carried in the corresponding period of last fiscal, registering a 15% growth. The East Coast Railway has achieved

However, the saffron party's two faces—Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Ashiwini Vaishnav- also did not campaign for the BJP candidates even as MPs and former Union Minister Pratap Sarangi and Jua Oram actively joined the campaigning.

The parties this time also tried to woo the voters by roping in film stars to campaign for them.

While Ollywood popular actress Varsha Priyadarshini campaigned for the BJD candidate in Brahmapur panchayat of Bhadrak Block, another Odia film actor Asrumochan Mohanty campaigned for Jagya Hentala, BJP's Zilla Parishad candidate from Zone-2 of Borigumma Block in Koraput.

The Chhattisgarh's Excise Minister Kawasi Lakhan campaigned for the Congress candidates in Rayagada's Kasipur and Tikiri, and in Bisamcuttack and Munniguda.

Several Ollywood actors including Tamanna, Poonam and Debashis campaigned for the BJD with local MLAs.

Meanwhile, the police have made elaborate security arrangements with focus on left wing extremism affected districts where the Maoists have appealed to the people to boycott panchayat elections.

"Special security arrangements have been made in the districts of Malakngiri, Koraput, Kalanadi, Bolangir, Rayagada and Kandhamal in view of the Maoist presence in those districts," said a senior police officer engaged in the anti-maoist operations.

SEC, Odisha A P Padhi said the arrangements have been made for video recording at sensitive booths and CCTV have been installed at counting and strong rooms where ballot boxes to be stored after the polling.

9452 wagons per day which is about 174 rakes per day. This Division has also surpassed its last year annual loading performance of 131.36MT. Similarly, Waltair and Sambalpur Divisions of ECoR have also performed better than previous year. From the above loading East Coast Railway has earned Rs 19,884.3 crore which is 20% more than the corresponding period of last fiscal.

This could be possible due to outstanding performance of all the three divisions of East Coast Railway, i.e. Khurda Road, Waltair and Sambalpur, the railway officials said.

Relentless round the clock close monitoring & outstanding supervision, dedicated and sincere work force brought this performance, they said. During the current fiscal, ECoR is followed by South East Central Railway (SECR) with 182.0MT and South Eastern Railway (SER) with 168.5MT in freight loading.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic, slump in demand for export of iron ore; East Coast Railway has achieved this remarkable performance. Special focus was given to power houses during the coal crisis.

Apart from the above, ECoR had also run 44 numbers of Oxygen special trains towards different destinations of the country to cover the Oxygen crisis during Covid pandemic.

Pact for Gender Equality

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Government is going to sign a Non-financial MoU with J-PAL to improve gender outcomes in the state. This will accelerate gender equity by changing gendered attitudes and behaviors among school going adolescents. Bishnupada Sethi, Principal Secretary School & Mass Education has discussed the issues with senior officers of the Department of School & Mass Education, before green signalling the Pact. The programme does not involve additional financial outlay and requires minimal in-kind support from the Government of Odisha. The program focuses on integrating the gender equity curriculum into the school syllabi for Classes VI-X.

The purpose of the gender equity program is in synchronisation with the goal of the 5T School Transformation program which is to help the children dream big and move forward with confidence

First phase rural polls in 116 villages of Odisha's Ganjam

BERHAMPUR: As many as 5,67,756 voters including 2,71,105 women in five blocks of Ganjam

have been set up in the villages, 1,645 polling parties were despatched to their assigned booths on Monday. Sources

been set up. Besides to facilitate voters from inaccessible villages of Patrapur block, 17 temporary booths

tensify patrolling in the poll-bound villages. Poll observer and additional secretary of Higher Education de-



district will elect 116 sarpanch and samiti members and 16 zilla parishad members in the first phase of three-tier panchayat polls scheduled on Wednesday.

While 1,645 booths

said video recording will be done at 178 sensitive and 146 hyper-sensitive booths in the villages. For women voters, five pink booths-one each in the five-block headquarters have

have been set up in other areas. In a meeting to review preparedness for the elections, Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange asked police and excise personnel to in-

partment Birendra Kumar Karakara said passes have been issued to candidates and their agents and they will be allowed to enter the booths only after producing the same.

Akhilesh Yadav cares only about development of Saifai family, alleges Adityanath

KANNUJ: In a scathing attack on the Samajwadi Party,

Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress were not there

protected," the chief minister said. "No one is allowed to

wisher."



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said while the BJP believes in "development for all", Akhilesh Yadav "cares only about the development of the Saifai family".

Saifai is the native village of Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, the father of party chief Akhilesh Yadav.

At a public meeting here, Adityanath said, "The Samajwadi

for you during the pandemic. But our government gave free vaccine to everyone and ensured that no one sleeps hungry." He claimed the law-and-order situation in Uttar Pradesh has improved and lot and there is no place for anarchy in the state. "Earlier, there was no security. The property of the poor was grabbed. But during our government, mafia and goons were sent to jail and sisters and daughters were

play with anyone's faith. Now, instead of being curfew imposed in the state, 'Kanwad Yatra' takes place." He alleged that under the previous government, widow and handicapped pensions used to be looted and distributed among the "samajwadis". "Now the government is giving pension to one crore elderly and disabled people. Those who played with your life cannot be your well-

"The BJP believes in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' whereas the Samajwadi Party chief's slogan is only the development of the Saifai family," Adityanath said. He praised BJP candidate of Kannauj Aseem Arun, a former IPS officer, and urged party ticket holders to win all assembly seats of the district.

Adityanath also spoke about the perfume of Kannauj and said the "socialist perfume has put a bad name of this place" in the world.

In November last year, Akhilesh Yadav has launched a specially made "Samajwadi perfume" hoping to spread the "scent of socialism" in the state. Kannauj will go to the polls in the third phase on February 20.



this remarkable performance in just 320 days as against 360 days loaded in corresponding period of last fiscal. This Railway had loaded 200 MT of cargo in 366 days in 2019-20 fiscal and took 360 days time in the 2020-21 fiscal. During the current fiscal, ECoR has loaded 113.35MT of coal, 7.06MT of raw material for steel plants, 18.46MT of iron & steel, 27.22MT of iron ore, 1.13MT of cement, 2.56MT of food grains, 5 MT of fertilizer, 2.34 MT of POL and 23.37MT of freight loaded in containers and other cargo.

Major contributors of freight include Talcher, Paradeep, Dhamara, Visakhapatnam, Gangavaram, Keonjhar, KK Line, Steel Plants, Aluminium plants and from other places of ECoR jurisdiction. During the period, 132.54MT of freight carried from Khurda Road Division, 57.21MT of freight from Waltair Division and 10.73MT of freight carried from Sambalpur Division. Khurda Road Division of ECoR has utilised

to face all challenges in life. This program will be implemented in the Academic Year 2022 and onwards. The curriculum will come as a supplementary textbook for Social Studies and its allied subjects like Geography, History, Political Science this year and will be printed by the Government. From 2023 onwards the curriculum will be integrated to the existing SCERT Social Studies and its allied subjects like Geography, History, Political Science textbooks. The partner team would undertake a formative study across 5 districts of Odisha to understand the local nuances for curriculum customization to the State context. J-PAL South Asia will be the key knowledge and learning partner supporting the Government in measurement of impact and implementation. The gender equity curriculum will be adapted and

customized to the local context through formative research. The partner team will work with the Department to train the gender resource coordinators as master trainers, who will be empowered to cascade the curriculum to social studies teachers across all Upper Primary and Secondary schools in the State using a train-the-trainer model. That is, these master trainers will in turn cascade the training to teachers at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIETS). Master trainers and teachers will undergo the training on core gender and inclusion concepts, instructional design concepts, facilitation skills and subject orientation on the curriculum to be rolled out. State Project Director, OSEPA Anupam Saha has been appointed as the State Nodal Officer for implementation of the program.

Mamita murder: Minister Dibya Mishra met Gobinda before his arrest, alleges Congress

BHUBANESWAR: Ahead of the first phase panchayat polls beginning on February 16, the Congress on Monday targeted Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra over the Mamita Meher murder case. The party alleged that the police are trying to cover up the case and protect the minister. Addressing a media conference here, party spokesperson Manoj Mohapatra referred to the 1,500 page chargesheet filed by the police. Mohapatra alleged that the chargesheet has only mentioned the key accused Gobinda Sahu and his driver Radhe but ignored many other aspects of the case. The Congress released a video to substantiate its earlier allegation that the minister had travelled to Raipur in October last year where he met Sahu before the latter's arrest. In the video, the minister is seen approaching the boarding gate at Raipur airport alone. Mohapatra alleged that from Raipur, the minister had left for New Delhi via Chandigarh on Octo-

ber 15. He then flew to Raipur on October 18 where he met the main accused Sahu. Giving details of his travels, he said the minister flew from Raipur to Delhi on an IndiGo flight (2409). Same day, he left Delhi at 3.50 pm on another IndiGo flight ((2313) for Chandigarh, where he arrived at 4.45 pm, he added. On October 18, Mishra departed from Chandigarh airport on a Vistara flight (UK 707) at 3.25 pm for Delhi. From Delhi, he departed at 6.45 pm by an IndiGo flight (2375) for Raipur where he arrived at 8.35 pm, he added. Mohapatra wanted to know whether the State government was aware of the trip. Besides, if the Chandigarh administration was also informed that a minister from Odisha was in the city. "Only two people are named in the Mamita Meher chargesheet. The minister, the main conspirator, has not been named in it. We had earlier alleged that the minister visited Raipur which he had denied. Today, we have given proof of that," he said.

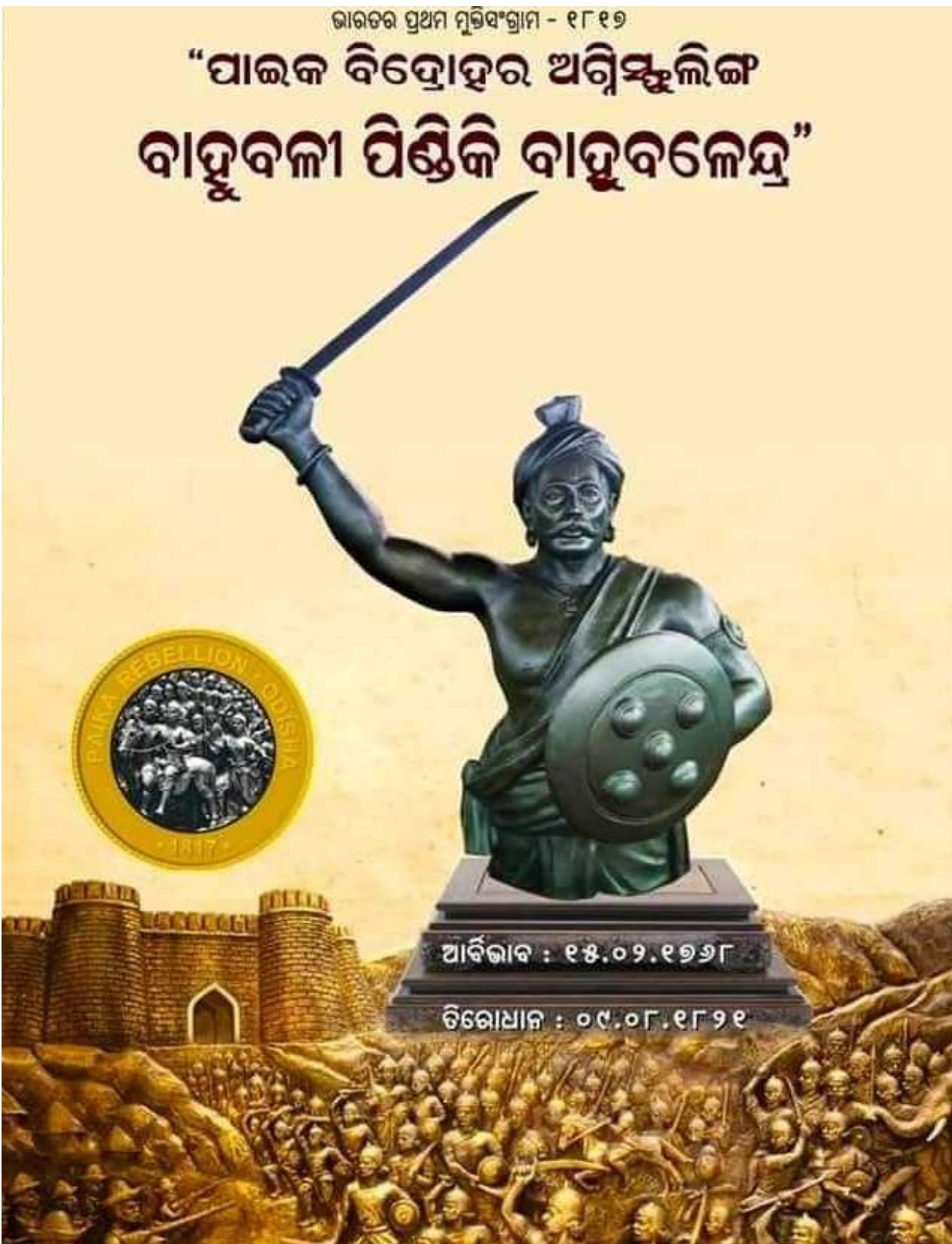
Odisha panchayat elections: Electioneering for 1st phase comes to a close

BHUBANESWAR: Campaigning for the first phase panchayat elections on February 16 came to a close on Monday with stray incidents of violence in some places of the State. Voting will be

Keonjhar district and B a s u d e v p u r panchayat under Digapahandi block in Ganjam district in which six persons were injured. Two groups of BJD workers owing allegiance was injured in an attack by two unidentified motorcycle-borne miscreants. State Election Commission (SEC) secretary RN Sahu told mediapersons that final preparations are the polling parties will leave for the remaining 19 districts on Tuesday. Stating that polling will be held from 7 am till 1 pm on February 16, Sahu said that polling parties, police, and



Pindiki Bahubalendra 255 tam jayanti-Khordha-15 Feb 22



Khordha (KCN): School, Trinath Charana Kala Bisub Milan Samiti, Khordha Jilla Bhasha Surakhya Sammilani, Sambad Sahitya Ghara, Aryavart Ancient Academy, Odisha State Brigade

School, Trinath Charana Kala Sansad, Konark sahitya sansad, Palla Saraswati Sishu Mandir, Khordha Itihaas Sankalan Samiti Advisor, Utkal Vikash Parisad,

Kalinga Paika Sangathan, Sahid Ragh-Dibakar Smruti Committee, Khordha Jilla Baristha Nagarika Mancha Vice-President, Sankat M o c h a n

Bidyamandir, Khordha Aaitihasik Samaj Member, Odisha Bhasha Pratisthan, Khordha Head Post Office Advisory Committee Associate Editor, AAMARI SATYA

held at 200 zilla parishad (ZP) zones in 71 blocks, 1,669 panchayats and 22,379 wards across the State. As many as 67.51 lakh voters will exercise their franchise in the first phase. Pre-poll violence was reported from several parts of the State including Joda in

to former MLA from Champua Sanatan Mahakud and present BJD MLA Meenakshi Mahanta clashed in Palasa panchayat of Joda block. CPM candidate Pushpita Jena (42) contesting for the Gobindpur panchayat samiti member post in Bonai block of Sundargarh district being put in place for smooth polling on Wednesday. Polling officials have left for their respective booths in 11 districts - Balasore, Bhadrak, Khurda, Nayagarh, Puri, Ganjam, G a j a p a t i, Kandhamal, Boudh, Rayagada and Koraput - on Monday. Other group of other arrangements have been finalised for the first phase polls. Elections will be held in adherence to Covid guidelines. While all polling personnel are vaccinated with double dose, the booths will be sanitised a day before the elections. The rural polls will be held in five phases from February 16 to 24.

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SpiceJet posts Rs 42 cr quarterly profit amid turbulent times; to expand 737 MAX fleet

NEW DELHI: Propelled primarily by higher revenues from passenger and cargo segments, SpiceJet on Tuesday reported a consolidated profit of Rs 42.45 crore in the quarter ended December 2021 and is set to expand its aircraft fleet as well as freighter capacity. SpiceJet, which is currently going through

experience, launching new customer-centric services, optimising daily operations based on IT, and expanding network both domestically and internationally," the release said. Besides, the carrier is planning to significantly increase freighter capacity in the coming quarters.



turbulent times amid legal woes, saw its shares surge over 9 per cent after the announcement of the quarterly results as the airline had a consolidated loss of Rs 66.78 crore in 2020 December quarter.

Total income in the latest December quarter climbed to Rs 267.73 crore compared to Rs 187.06 crore in the same period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing.

On a standalone basis, the airline recorded a profit of Rs 23.28 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal year. In the year-ago period, it had a loss of Rs 56.96 crore.

Revenues, on a standalone basis, went up 74 per cent to Rs 2,679 crore in the latest quarter under review. In the year-ago period, the same stood at Rs 1,539 crore. The airline noted that it witnessed strong growth across segments, including a 98 per cent increase in passenger business revenue to Rs 1,681 crore.

The airline's Boeing 737 MAX returned into operations and the airline termed the settlement with Boeing a significant event during the December quarter.

"As expected, the company received cash and non-cash accommodations significantly in excess of the amounts due to lessors during the period of grounding of MAX aircraft," it said in a release.

The domestic load factor during the December quarter stood at 85.2 per cent. SpiceXpress, the airline's logistics platform, saw its revenue jump 17 per cent on a quarter-on-quarter basis to Rs 584 crore in the three months ended December.

"The airline is now aiming for a stronger comeback in 2022 by utilising and expanding its 737 MAX fleet for better yield and flying

India's exports rise by 36.76 per cent to \$61.41 billion in January

NEW DELHI: India's overall exports, merchandise, and services combined, increased by 36.76 per cent to \$61.41 billion in January 2022 from \$44.90 billion in the corresponding month last year, the government data showed on Tuesday.

The country's merchandise exports grew by 25.28 per cent to \$34.50 billion in January 2022 from \$27.54 billion recorded in January 2021.

Overall imports in January 2022 are estimated to be \$67.76 billion, which is 30.54 per cent higher than \$51.91 billion recorded in January 2021, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. India's merchandise imports grew by 23.54 per cent to \$51.93 billion in January 2022 from \$42.03 billion re-

corded in the corresponding month of 2021. Trade deficit widened to \$17.42 billion in January 2022 from \$14.49

\$616.91 billion, exhibiting a growth of 54.35 per cent.

Merchandise exports for the period April-January 2021-22

January 2020-21, registering a positive growth of 62.65 per cent. Imports in April-January 2021-22 have registered a



billion recorded in January 2021. April-January 2021-22 period, India's overall exports, merchandise, and services combined, rose to \$545.71 billion, exhibiting a growth of 37.68 per cent over the same period last year. Overall imports in April-January 2021-22 period are estimated to be

stood at \$335.88 billion as against \$228.92 billion recorded during April-January 2020-21, registering a positive growth of 46.73 per cent. Merchandise imports for the period April-January 2021-22 stood at \$495.75 billion as against \$304.79 billion during the period April-

positive growth of 22.31 per cent in comparison to April-January 2019-20. Trade deficit for April-January 2021-22 widened to \$159.87 billion as against \$75.87 billion recorded in April-January 2020-21. During April-January 2019-20 period trade deficit stood at \$141.21 billion.

ALSO READ: Apex court asks Maran, KAL Airways to consider SpiceJet's Rs 600-crore offer
SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said he was happy that the airline reported a "profit in Q3 FY2022 driven by excellent logistics operations, rebound in passenger traffic and various accommodations from aircraft manufacturer and lessors".

According to him, the passenger industry witnessed the much-needed turnaround in the third quarter as COVID cases ebbed in the first half of the quarter, travel picked up significantly and there was finally hope that the worst was behind us. However, that changed by the second half of December as Omicron halted that recovery.

"Our performance would have been much better but was impacted by the unexpected delay in the return to service of the 737 MAX, rising fuel costs and certain exceptional adjustments. I am happy to say that there are renewed signs of recovery in the passenger segment and the logistics segment continues to remain strong," he noted.

On Tuesday, the airline's scrip soared over 9 per cent to close at Rs 64.5 on NSE while it climbed 8 per cent to settle at Rs 64 on BSE. The settlement with Boeing not only brought back into operations the grounded MAX aircraft but also paves way for the induction of more efficient and younger MAX aircraft into the fleet. The settlement also ensures the resumption of new aircraft deliveries from our order of 155 MAX aircraft, the release said.

The company had 13 MAX aircraft prior to the worldwide grounding of these planes in March 2019 due to technical reasons. The aircraft was approved for resumption of operations in August last year.

In an industry-first initiative, the airline built Pilot Docs, a digital library to eliminate the need to carry large amounts of paper manuals on the aircraft, resulting in operational efficiency, the release said.

Despite rising inflation, RBI unlikely to hike rates till August: Report

MUMBAI: Despite retail inflation rising to 6.01 per cent in January, and likely to remain elevated till April, a foreign brokerage report expects RBI to leave key policy rates unchanged throughout the first half of 2022. Swiss brokerage UBS Securities India sees the policy to change only from the second half wherein the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may deliver a 50 basis points hike in the second half starting from the August policy.

The official data released on Monday showed that retail inflation spurted to a seven-month high in January at 6.01 per cent, but lower than the previous high of 6.26 per cent in June 2021.

Wholesale inflation stayed in double-digits at 12.96 per cent. The government also revised upwards the CPI inflation for December 2021 to 5.66 from 5.59 per cent. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das had said the rise in inflation was primarily due to statistical reasons, especially in the third quarter of FY22, and the same base effect will play in different ways in the coming months. Das had said the RBI has already factored in high inflation num-

bers in its recent bi-monthly monetary policy, and retail inflation in January above 6 per cent "should not surprise or create any alarm". RBI expects retail inflation to soften to 4.5 per cent next fiscal year, while projecting it at 5.3 per cent for 2021-22 and based on this it had left all the key rates unchanged and retained its dovish stance.

Tanvee Gupta-Jain, the chief economist at UBS Securities India said, the latest numbers are on the expected line and the uptick was largely driven by an adverse base effect and continued supply-side constraints.

Core inflation remained sticky at 6 per cent versus 6.1 per cent in the previous month, reflecting gradual pass-through of higher input cost to the consumers.

She also said price pressure in rural areas is higher at 6.1 per cent than in urban areas which were marginally lower at 5.9 per cent.

She expects retail inflation to remain elevated in the 5.5-6 per cent range until April given the massive spike in commodity prices, especially oil, supply-side disruptions along with rising input costs pressures which will keep inflation

higher over the coming months.

Though CPI will remain elevated until April 2022, before easing towards 5 per cent from the June quarter, when oil prices are likely to begin to fall on rising supplies, she expects the MPC to keep the repo rate unchanged till the first half of FY23, before delivering the first hike in the August policy and

a cumulative increase of 50 basis points hike in the second half.

She said UBS expects that over the next two-three months, supply is likely to remain constrained and the macro backdrop, given the China stimulus, will remain supportive and a material impact of crude prices falling will be visible over the next 6-12 months.

PM Modi to deliver inaugural address at TERI's World Sustainable Development Summit on February 16

Continued from page-1

source security, the statement issued by Prime Minister's Office read on Tuesday.

The three-day summit starting on February 16 will be attended by Luis Abinader, President of the Dominican Republic, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Amina J Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations, heads of various intergovernmental organisations, Ministers/ Envoys from more than a dozen countries and delegates from over 120 countries.

Resentment brews over draft voters list for BMC limits

Continued from page-1

9,000 voters. Locals and former public representatives have also expressed shock over the presence of only 1,784 voters in Ward 33. The ward earlier had around 8,000 voters.

The discrepancy in voter segregation will cause a lot of inconvenience for the voters in the future, said members of Opposition political parties. They asked how a voter from a particular ward will raise grievances related to the locality if his/her name figures in the voters list of another ward.

Besides, people expressed displeasure over the short period notified for filing objections and claims which may have an impact on the voters turnout in the civic polls. Voters in BMC jurisdiction have been given six days to file their claims and objections. The deadline for the same is February 16.

"One has to find his/her name in the voters list and then raise claims with the ADM office to swap a name from the voters list of one ward to another. The process takes time for which a period of six days is insufficient," admitted another former corporator.

Bhubaneswar ADM Prafulla Swain, however, said that the timeline has been fixed by the State Election Commission. So far around 30 grievances related to 'name in the list of other wards' have been received. Around 12 officers have been deployed in the field to help people whose names are missing from the voters list of the ward they live in. Besides, he said that another ward-wise voters list will be published on February 19 prior to publication of the final list on February 24 to allow voters raise further queries if necessary.

Will rift in BJD pave way for Congress, BJP?

Continued from page-1

sence of party candidates and a weakening hold in different panchayats, the BJP too is showing signs of intra-party rift. The party is apparently divided between supporters of Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and MP Aparajita Sarangi. The BJP's weak local base and lack of unity among party leaders are also making an impact.

While BJP leader Rajkishore Behera ruled out factionalism within the party and exuded confidence on the party capturing ZP president post with absolute majority, president of Tirtol assembly youth Congress committee Bedadyuti Prusty confessed that the party lacks leadership and organisational strength from panchayat to block level.

Commenting on the intra-party rift, district BJD unit president and local MLA Prasant Muduli said it is natural to have increasing dissidence within party due to rise in the number of aspiring candidates.

Punjab polls: Priyanka Gandhi rides tractor; calls BJP & AAP 'two sides of same coin'

Continued from page-1

The Congress leader also accused the AAP, the main opposition party in Punjab, of doing nothing in Delhi and said its government has been a "failure".

People must be wary of the Delhi model of governance being touted by the AAP as even the BJP came to power at the Centre showcasing its Gujarat model in 2014, but the reality is now before everyone, she said.

People have seen the reality of the Gujarat model and now AAP is showcasing the Delhi model, she said.

"In Delhi, there is nothing in the name of improvement in health and educational institutions or employment. Understand these things," she told the audience.

In an apparent dig at Kejriwal and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress general secretary said, "Make them understand that one does not become a Sardar by wearing a 'banwati pagri' (turban) on stage (during campaigning)."

"Make them understand who the real Sardars are...make them understand that Punjab is Punjabis," she said.

"Form your own government here. AAP will not give you any new politics nor Narendra Modi. Over here, new politics is here," she said, pointing to Channi.

Hailing the Congress-led government in the state, Gandhi said Channi took many courageous decisions during his short stint of 111 days "for the people of Punjab".

"Those who come from outside and talk to you about Punjabiyat, teach them what Punjabiyat means," she said.

Seeking to strike a chord with the locals, Gandhi also mentioned that she was married into a Punjabi family. Punjab goes to polls on February 20.

Russian skater Kamila Valieva blames grandfather's medicine for dope test fail

BEIJING: Kamila Valieva's lawyers say grandfather was taking."



the Russian skater failed a doping test before the Olympics because of contamination from medication her grandfather was taking. IOC member Denis Oswald says part of the 15-year-old's defense is "contamination which happened with a product her

The argument was made at a Court of Arbitration for Sport hearing late Sunday night. The CAS judges ruled Monday that Valieva can compete in the women's individual event despite testing positive for a banned heart medication. Although she can

skate, the investigation will continue for months, and she may be stripped of medals later. She helped the Russian team win gold last week and is the favorite in the women's event starting Tuesday. Valieva and her entourage will be investigated by the Russian anti-doping agency after the Olympics. Even if the Russian investigation clears her, the ruling will likely be appealed. Oswald, a veteran sports lawyer who investigated Sochi Olympics doping scandal cases for the IOC, says lawyers for

Valieva "presented elements that brought some doubts about her guilt." The CAS panel cited several reasons for allowing her to skate, including her status as a minor, the potential harm to her career and the delay in informing Russia about the positive test, from a sample taken on Dec. 25. Even if she wins another medal, the International Olympic Committee announced no medals will be handed out in events that Valieva places in until after the full investigation.

'Tired' Kamila Valieva to skate at Olympics after doping ruling

BEIJING: Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva was worn out after a grueling doping hearing ended with her being allowed to skate Tuesday in the women's

Valieva finishes in the top three because the International Olympic Committee is concerned that she could still be banned after a full investigation of her doping

short program. The free skate to decide the medals is Thursday morning at the historic Capital Indoor Stadium. Valieva and her teammates are trying to

schemes in events involving American athletes and sponsors. It has been Tutberidze, and the rest of the Russian team, that has received the vast majority of worldwide scorn.

"The ladies event is a complete joke," said 2018 Olympic figure skater Adam Rippon, who now helps coach one of the American women, Mariah Bell. "It's not a real competition and it most likely won't even have a medal ceremony. So many Olympic experiences stolen from clean athletes who got here without the help of performance-enhancing drugs."

The IOC has said it will "organize dignified medal ceremonies" once Valieva's case is decided, but that could be months down the road. The organizing committee also did not explain where or how it might be held.

"So everyone's medals are going to be shipped to them? Yay for Olympic moments," said retired pairs skater Chris Knierim, whose wife Alexa Knierim and partner Brandon Frazier helped the U.S. win team silver last week.

That medal ceremony also will not be held in Beijing because the Russian team could eventually be disqualified.

"Four years of hard work just to wait for UPS to deliver your Olympic medal. Hope they have tracking numbers at least," Knierim said jokingly. "It's going to take extra long because we all know how fast customs is."



short program at the Beijing Olympics.

The 15-year-old Valieva is the overwhelming favorite for the gold medal alongside Russian teammates Alexandra Trusova and Anna Shcherbakova, who are aiming for the first sweep by any nation of the women's Olympic podium.

Valieva was cleared to skate even though she failed a drug test taken Dec. 25, the result only emerging last week, after her two brilliant performances in the team competition helped win gold for the Russian team. The Court of Arbitration for Sport gave her a favorable decision early Monday in part because she is a minor, known as a "protected person," and is subject to different rules from an adult athlete.

"These days have been very difficult for me," Valieva, who practiced in both of her allotted sessions Monday, told Russian state broadcaster Channel One in comments shown that night. "I'm happy but I'm tired emotionally."

There won't be a medal ceremony if

case. The three-member court ruled only on whether she could skate at the Olympics and did not consider the full merits of the case.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport had already said Valieva testified during its lengthy hearing, which ended about 3 a.m. Monday. Valieva said she watched the entire hearing by video link from the Olympic Village.

"I sat there for seven hours, we had one 20-minute break, and I sat there and watched. It was very difficult, but it is apparently one of the moments, of the phases, that I have to go through," Valieva said, adding that the entire process had taught her that adult life "can be unfair to some extent."

Valieva is scheduled to perform in the final group, 26th among the 30 women taking part in the individual competition on Tuesday morning in Beijing. Trusova and Shcherbakova, who like Valieva are coached by the controversial Eteri Tutberidze, skate shortly after her, before Kaori Sakamoto of Japan finishes the

extend an era of Russian dominance in women's figure skating at the Olympics. It began at the 2014 Sochi Games, when the country's state-sponsored doping scheme first came to light, and Adelina Sotnikova won the gold medal for the host nation. Alina Zagitova and Evgenia Medvedeva followed with a one-two finish for what was known as the Olympic Athletes from Russia at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games.

Zagitova and Medvedeva also were coached by Tutberidze, the former ice dancer-turned-kingmaker who has been criticized for pushing young skaters to extreme limits in the pursuit of Olympic medals.

The World Anti-Doping Agency announced this week it will investigate Tutberidze along with the rest of the entourage that has surrounded Valieva in the lead-up to the Olympics. Tutberidze also could be subject to prosecution in the U.S. under a recently enacted law that criminalizes doping

Free tickets for 10,000 fans at Champions League final

LONDON: In an unprecedented move, 10,000 fans will be able to attend the Champions League final for free.

The gesture by competition organizer UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said in a statement, "and we thought it would be a nice way to recognise the difficulties they have experienced over the last two years and how

fans can attend the Champions League final for free at the Juventus stadium in Turin on May 22. UEFA said the giveaway for the four finals in May will not

from •600 last season at the final in Porto to •690 (\$780), while category 2 prices will jump from •450 to •490 (\$555). UEFA is set to confirm all prices in March.



for the biggest club final in world football stands in contrast to the cheapest tickets for the Super Bowl on Sunday costing thousands of dollars. Each club will receive 5,000 tickets for the showpiece in the Russian city of St. Petersburg on May 28, which have to be given to loyal supporters rather than to sponsors or club officials. "Football fans are the lifeblood of the game," UEFA Presi-

they nevertheless still managed to support their teams and live their passion even when away from the stadiums." There will also be 8,000 free tickets split between the finalists in the Europa League in Budapest, Hungary and 6,000 for the final of the inaugural edition of the third-tier Europa Conference League in Tirana, Albania. For UEFA's senior women's club competition, 6,000

impact amounts of cash distributed to clubs. The cost of the two cheapest tickets will also be frozen for the men's Champions League final for at least the next three seasons, with category 4 remaining at •70 (\$80) and category 3 at •180 (\$204), UEFA said in a statement. The Associated Press has separately seen documentation showing the most expensive tickets will rise

The Football Supporters Europe group welcomed UEFA recognizing the importance of crowds with the free tickets and pricing strategy. "Fans do not have an unlimited amount of money to spend on football," FSE said in a statement. "We are therefore pleased that, with this positive gesture, UEFA has acknowledged the fact that the continual inflation of ticket prices is excluding more and more people from watching the game."




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