



TAMANNAAH EXCITED

Tamannaah Bhatia announces the end of her shoot for web show 'November Story' which is to be released soon

LEISURE P2



VACCINE EMBARGO

Supreme Leader of Iran Ayatollah Ali Khamenei bans import of COVID-19 vaccines from the US and the UK

INTERNATIONAL P10



MATCH EVENLY POISED

Steve Smith's ton was neutralised by Ravindra Jadeja's and Shubman Gill's heroics on the second day of the third Test

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



WHATSAPP INDIA has started sharing data with us. And we're flooded with billions of good morning messages!

SHORT TAKES

Mild earthquake hits Kandhamal

Phulbani: A mild earthquake was reportedly felt in several areas of Odisha's Kandhamal and Ganjam district Friday. The tremors were experienced in Tumudibandha, Daringbadi, Baliguda, Raikia, K Nuagaon, and Sankarkhol in Kandhamal and Bhanjanagar area of Ganjam around 9.50 PM. No loss of life and property has been reported. Residents of the areas were seen panicking and rushing out of their houses in fear. The earthquake was of magnitude 3.2 and occurred at Lat: 20.13 N and Long: 84.25 E, and at a depth of 5km in Kandhamal.

Third Chilika Bird Festival kicks off

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 3rd National Chilika Bird Festival via videoconferencing Friday. Patnaik described the destination as "a pilgrimage for over a million winged visitors of varied species, which undertake flights to the mighty but calm Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lake." He applauded the efforts of Odisha Tourism and Ecotour Odisha for having organised the event which promises to add another feather to Odisha's cap.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	48782.51 ↑ 689.19
NIFTY	14347.30 ↑ 209.90
DOLLAR	73.81 ↓ ₹0.17
EURO	89.88 ↓ ₹0.21
GOLD	₹49,351 ↓ ₹1553
SILVER	₹67,075 ↓ ₹2887

WEATHER

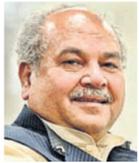
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	32.6°C	32.5°C
TEMP. MIN	18.0°C	15.6°C
Humidity	73%	75%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Fog/mist in the morning

'Ghar wapsi' after 'law wapsi'

As the Centre rules out repealing farm laws in the 8th round talks, farm union leaders stick to their demands

“The reforms have been welcomed by a large section of farmers in various states. Unions should think about the interests of the entire country”



Government is testing our strength, but we will not bow down. It seems we will have to spend Lohri and Baisakhi festivals here at protest sites



JOGINDER SINGH UGRAHAN | UNION LEADER



Farmers' representatives during the 8th round of talks with the government over the new farm laws, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, Friday

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 8: As the eighth round of talks between the Centre and protesting farmers Friday failed to break an over-a-month-long deadlock, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said no decision could be reached as unions did not give alternatives to their demand for the repeal of laws.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting that lasted for little over two hours, Tomar said the government is still hopeful that union leaders will come with alternatives to discuss in the next round of talks January 15.

But, he virtually ruled out repeal of the laws saying many other groups across the country are supporting these reforms. On whether the government made a proposal to farmers to join a pending case in Supreme Court on issues related to farmers' protest, Tomar said the government did not make any such suggestion but it is always committed to follow whatever is decided by the Supreme Court.

Sources said the next date has been decided after keeping in mind a scheduled hearing of the Supreme Court January 11 as the government feels the apex court may look into the legality of

the three laws, besides other issues related to farmers' protests. Asked whether the government would consider any proposal for allowing states to decide whether to implement the laws or not, Tomar said no such proposal was made by any farmer leader in this regard, but if such a suggestion is made the government will take a call at that time.

After the meeting, union leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan said the meeting was inconclusive and it was unlikely that any resolution can happen in the next round of talks as well.

We do not want anything less than the repeal of laws, he said.

Government is testing our strength, but we will not bow down. It seems we will have to spend Lohri and Baisakhi festivals here at protest sites, he said.

Another union leader Hanman Mollah said farmers are ready to fight till death and going to court was not an option.

He said the farmer unions will meet January 11 to decide their next course of action. Sticking to their key demand of the repeal of three farm laws to end their protest, farmer leaders told the government their ghar wapsi from protest sites on Delhi borders can happen only after law wapsi but the Centre insisted talks must be limited to contentious clauses and ruled out a complete withdrawal of Acts.

Accused refuses to undergo narco test

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Jan 8: In a huge development in the Pari murder case of Nayagarh district, the accused minor Friday refused to undergo narco analysis test before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB).

After being produced before JJB by the Special Investigation Team (SIT), the accused denied in writing to undergo the narco analysis test. Following this, the court rejected the SIT's plea for the narco test.



January 4, the SIT had appealed the POCSO Court to give permission for conduct of the test of the accused. Hearing the plea the next day, the POCSO court had maintained that the accused will be treated as a minor and the decision on the narco test will be taken by the JJB.

SIT chief Arun Bothra had earlier claimed that the accused was

Earlier, the POCSO court had maintained that the accused will be treated as a minor and the decision on the narco test will be taken by the JJB

addicted to watching pornography. The victim minor girl often visited his house to eat blackberry and he raped her July 14. When the girl resisted, the accused boy strangled her to death.

According to an official source, narcoanalysis test bears considerable significance for taking further legal steps as the SIT team needs to establish crucial evidence in the much-debated murder case.

Meanwhile, the SIT sought brain mapping test of the accused. The SIT moved the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) seeking permission for the brain mapping test of the minor accused. The hearing on the plea has been scheduled for January 13.

On the other hand, mobile phone, SIM card, and other articles that were seized from the accused have been sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory for examination.

Lakhvi gets 15-year jail

LeT commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi pleaded before the court that he was 'falsely implicated' in this case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, Jan 8: Mumbai attack mastermind and Lashkar-e-Taiba operations commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was sentenced to 15 years in jail Friday by a Pakistani anti-terrorism court here in a terror financing case, amidst growing international pressure on Islamabad to bring to justice terrorists roaming free in the country.

UN proscribed terrorist Lakhvi, 61, who was on bail since 2015 in the Mumbai attack case, was arrested by the Counter-Terrorism



Department (CTD) of Punjab province Saturday. "The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore convicted Lakhvi for commission of offences of terrorism financing in a case registered by the CTD for 15 years under different sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997," a court official told PTI after the hearing. Judge Ejaz Ahmad

Buttar sentenced Lakhvi to five years of rigorous imprisonment each on three counts with a fine of PKR 100,000 (approximately USD 620) each on three counts.

"In default of payment of fine, he will have to undergo an imprisonment of six months each on three counts. He has been sent to prison to serve the sentences," the official said.

Lakhvi pleaded before the court that he was "falsely implicated" in this case. He was accused of running a dispensary and using funds collected for terrorism financing.

MAN AVAILS ₹2.87 CR USING FAKE CHEQUE IN ROURKELA

ROURKELA: Economic Offences Wing of state Crime Branch arrested a person here Friday on charges of cheating a nationalised bank of ₹2.87 crores with a forged cheque of Karnataka State Co-operative Marketing Federation (KSCMFL). The accused identified as B Murti Pillai is a resident of Rourkela. He is the owner of BMP & Sons Construction Pvt. Ltd. And has a current bank account at the Rourkela branch of the Bank of India. According to the complaint filed by branch manager Anjani Kumar Singh, Pillai deposited a BOI cheque of ₹2.87 crore issued by KSCMFL November 3, 2020. Subsequently, the cheque was cleared by the bank and transferred the above amount into his cash credit account.

TRUMP MAY PARDON FAMILY, HIMSELF

EXPERTS DIVIDED

● A presidential self-pardon is untested and legal experts are divided on its constitutionality

● While all presidents issue controversial pardons at the end of their terms, Trump has moved at a faster pace than his predecessors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 8: President Donald Trump has prepared a sweeping list of individuals he's hoping to pardon in the final days of his administration that includes senior White House officials, family members, prominent rappers - and possibly himself, according to people familiar with the matter.

According to CNN, some of those conversations happened in recent weeks, and Trump has asked about the legal and political consequences of a self-pardon.

The news

comes as Democratic and Republican lawmakers alike rebuked Trump's conduct as thousands of his supporters stormed the US Capitol building Wednesday and clashed with police, resulting in four deaths and interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the victories of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the November 3 election.

It is not clear if the issue has come up since Wednesday's mayhem at the Capitol building fomented by the President's rhetoric or after his recent controversial call with the Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, the report said, citing multiple sources. The president has also asked for legal opinions on whether he has the authority to issue a self-pardon and has been advised on the potential political

'WILL SKIP BIDEN'S INAUGURATION'

President Donald Trump announced Friday he will skip Joe Biden's inauguration in a final, unrepentant act of division as his presidency imploded amid demands that he step aside for the last 12 days in office. "To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th," the US leader said on Twitter.

fallout, it said. The New York Times reported Thursday that Trump has suggested in conversations since Election Day that he wants to pardon himself, citing two people familiar with the discussions.

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Schools reopen for Std X, XII students



A faculty member conducts temperature checks as students enter the premises of Capital Girls High School, Unit 2, Bhubaneswar, Friday

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: After a gap of about nine months, schools across Odisha on Friday reopened their classrooms to students who would shortly be appearing for their board examination, amid strict adherence to COVID-19 guidelines, a senior official said.

Seats were arranged in a way to ensure all social distancing norms are followed, as faculty members imparted lessons to students of classes 10 and 12.

School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash stated that classes, with not more than 20-25 students, will also be held Saturdays and Sundays.

Syllabus has been reduced by 30 per cent, and no further deduction would be allowed, he said. On the reopening day, almost all schools focused on orienting students on Covid norms. Students entered school premises with consent letters from parents which were collected by the school authorities.

Dash reviewed the preparedness of schools by



BACK TO STUDIES

● Seats were arranged in a way to ensure all social distancing norms are followed

● Faculty members, with an eye on meeting the 100-day teaching target, imparted lessons to students

visiting multiple locations and interacting with students. Principal, BJB Junior College, Ranjan Bal said, "On the first day, students are being spoken to on all rules and regulation which are to be followed strictly. From tomorrow, physical classes will start. All students have the time tables."

"I am nervous as it's been a long time since we had come to the school. It will also be quite interesting to meet everybody after so many days," said a student Ashlesha Mohapatra.

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Gate No. 3, Exhibition Ground, Unit-III, Kharvela Nagar, BBSR 19th Dec. 2020- 14th Jan. 2021 Time: 10.30 AM To 9.00 PM

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MILEY MOURNS PET DOG'S DEATH WITH VIDEO TRIBUTE

Pop star Miley Cyrus is mourning the demise of her dog, and is looking at her music to heal her. The singer took to Instagram Friday to share an emotional message for the pet, revealing that she died of cancer.

ANNE ON RETURNING TO SCREEN AFTER A BREAK

Actress Anne Hathaway feels returning to screen after a break can be a tough challenge. "I feel like I'm going through something similar and it's a funny thing," she quipped, on returning to screen after a break.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may get to share your ideas and opinions with like-minded people. Ganesh says you may finally have a heart-to-heart chat with your beloved, and express your deep commitment. You may even talk of your long cherished dreams.

TAURUS
Logic may be your forte today, but in the game of life, sometimes the heart wins and sometimes the head. Your analytical skills will help you understand things better, in turn, making you wiser. You may feel an urge to spend on music cassettes, CDs and electronic gadgets.

GEMINI
You will witness a marked improvement in your emotional quotient, says Ganesh. This change may either come through watching a film, listening to a song or just a simple insight. At the workplace, people will be lavishing praise on you for your excellent performance.

CANCER
You know how to make money, and you are even better in putting it to good use. Today, you will have your one eye on the developments in the stock market, and the other on brochures of tourism companies. Yes, you may plan to spend some money on leisure, entertainment and getting closer to your family.

LEO
It may be that the best daffodils bloom early in the morning, but good ideas can come any time of the day, says Ganesh. So spruce up your management skills, as you shall need them to help organise and cash in on the multitude of ideas that will bombard you today.

VIRGO
A la Sisyphus, you may realise the futility of your efforts and constant failure in achieving success. But do not despair, says Ganesh. Recharge your imagination, inquisitiveness and intelligence and focus on your long-term goals, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today you will try to be adept in your favorite subject. Today you will be buying antique artistic things too. If there are any legal proceeding going on then the results will be in your favor. You shall be a success in everything that you touch today.

SCORPIO
There is a big black hole in your pocket, and it's high time you looked for remedies there. Loved ones will make use of your money as sultan cream - liberally and carelessly. You are most likely to burn the holes larger by spending lavishly, especially to impress a member of the opposite sex.

SAGITTARIUS
Get ready to rule hearts today. Your thoughtful insights into other people's psyche might just help you write a book on it! In the battleground of love, you will win over your sweetheart all over again, probably with a nice, slow dance coupled with a fantastic candlelit dinner.

CAPRICORN
Like you weren't already overworked, new responsibilities will keep you occupied throughout the day, says Ganesh. The excitement with which you work every day will weaken, and eventually die down by the end of the day.

AQUARIUS
You get a pat on the back due to your brilliant academic standing. People will admire your business acumen and may imitate your choices. But this doesn't mean you become haughty and unapproachable.

PISCES
Anticipation is all the fun. Sadly, this only alludes to your months-in-preparation travel plans that are most likely to be delayed today on one count or the other. Though, if this is any consolation, your trip, when it finally occurs, will bring you as much pleasure and satisfaction that you expected out of it, if not more, says Ganesh.

PC denies breaking lockdown rules in London

New Delhi: Actress Priyanka Chopra did not break lockdown rules in London, her team has claimed, adding that her salon visit was in accordance with the law and that she had necessary paperwork in place.

Earlier this week, it was reported that Priyanka flouted Covid-19 lockdown rules in the UK by stepping out for a salon appointment. She went to get her hair coloured for the upcoming romantic drama *Text for You* currently being shot in London.

It was reported that Priyanka went to the salon with her mother Madhu Chopra and pet dog Diana Wednesday.

At the moment, the UK is under lockdown amid the Covid-19 crisis, with all the personal care services, including salons and spas, shut.

Her team has stated that "the salon was opened privately for the production".

"Following government guidance, Priyanka's hair was coloured for the purpose of the film she is currently shooting in London. The salon was opened privately for the production and everyone involved had been tested and followed both the DCMS working guidelines and the film production regulations," the statement read.

"As I am sure you are aware, Film and TV production is permitted to continue in the UK, and locations can continue to accommodate shoots and recess that are carried out in-line with government guidelines. The exemption paperwork legally permitting her to be there was provided to the police, and they left satisfied," the statement added.

IANS



Tamannaah wraps up 'November Story'

Southern star Tamannaah Bhatia has shared the news with fans that she has wrapped up her shoot for the web show *November Story*.

"Wrapped up shoot for *November Story* today! It's been such an exciting project for me and I can't wait for you guys to binge watch this nail biting series which releases soon on @DisneyPlusHS. Can't thank my team enough for this incredibly memorable journey," she tweeted late on Thursday.

She also shared her look in the film. In the picture, she wears a serious expression and Indian wear.

The actress will also be seen in the Telugu remake of the Hindi thriller film *Anhadhun*, besides the Hindi film *Bole Chudiyan* co-starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui.

IANS



Arjun has a busy year ahead

Mumbai: Actor Arjun Rampal has a busy year ahead, going by his upcoming line-up of films. After starting the year with the courtroom drama *Nail Polish*, he tells you there are five projects as of now to keep him occupied in the months ahead.

"I have completed shooting of one film with Abbas-Mustanji called *Penthouse*, and now I will start shooting for *Dhaakad*. After that, I will resume shooting *The Battle Of Bhima Koregaon*. I started shooting for that film before I was diagnosed with Covid-19, so now I will complete the shoot. After that, I will start working for the second season of *The Final Call* and then, there is a film with Aparna Sen called *The Rapist*," Arjun told IANS.

From the ramp to the screen, he has been around for two decades now. "It's been a great journey. I got the opportunity to learn a lot and to work with almost everyone in the film industry since I started my career. I think I am very fortunate that way," he said.

IANS

OTT space gets political

New Delhi: Politics has never really been a favoured subject for Bollywood filmmakers. In a country where mainstream cinema never really got out of the grip of censor woes and protest groups, the Hindi film industry by and large avoided cinema that spoke of politics and politicians.

There have been cases in the past, after all, when themes pertaining to politics faced trouble. *Kissaa Kursee Kaa* was banned from release during Emergency owing to its satirical depiction of democracy in the country. *Aandhi* was banned a few months after release because it was felt that the film bore shades of Indira Gandhi and her politics. *Parzania*, depicting a fictional story against the backdrop of the 2002 Gujarat riots, was banned in that state, and so was *Firaq*. *Inshallah Kashmir* won a National Award, but was denied release, allegedly for showing the torture of ex-militants at the hands of army men.

Bollywood cinema has naturally hesitated looking at Indian politics and political themes while setting up fictional drama. However, the emerging streaming space is a different ball game altogether. With no direct censor control and with films and/or series going straight to cyber space, makers have the luxury to explore politics through fiction. While not many shows have directly tackled such themes, the numbers are growing. It will be a while before an Indian filmmaker will be game to show heavy politics the way, say, *The Comey Rule* did. But there has been a definite move towards intrepid portrayal of political characters and themes in our shows lately.

IANS brings you some of the best shows that use politics as a springboard for fictional drama:

TANDAV
Set in Delhi, the fictional drama takes one behind the closed corridors of power and politics, and showcases the lengths to which people will go in the pursuit of power. It stars Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia, Sunil Grover, Tigra Manshu Dhulia, Kritika Kamra, Sarah Jane Dias, Sandhya Mridul, Anup Soni and Hiten Tejwani. *Tiger Zinda Hai* director Ali Abbas Zafar is making his digital debut with the series. The Amazon original series will release January 15.

DARK 7 WHITE
The political thriller is centred on the death of Sumeet Vyas as Yudhveer Singh while he was on his way to becoming the Chief Minister, and a police officer (Jatin Sarna) joining the investigation. Also featuring Nidhi Singh, Monica Chaudhary, Taniya Kalra, Kunj Anand, and Rachit Bahal, the show is available on Zee5 and ALTBalaji.

QUEEN
Ramya Krishnan's *Queen* chronicles the life of Shakti Seshadri, a character that bears uncanny resemblance to late Tamil Nadu chief minister J. Jayalalithaa. The series captures her struggle with her family's adverse financial position, her excelling in academics and rising to the rank of a state topper and then emerging a superstar in the film industry, and eventually becoming the youngest chief minister of her state. The show streams on MX Player.

CITY OF DREAMS
Set in Mumbai, the 10-episode political thriller is helmed by Nagesh Kukunoor. It narrates the story of the feud within the Gaikwad family, which erupts after an assassination attempt on a polarising political figure. The show stars Atul Kulkarni and Priya Bapat, and is available on Disney+ Hotstar.

MODI: JOURNEY OF A COMMON MAN
Mahesh Thakur, Darshan Jariwala, Ashish Sharma, and Makrand Deshpande topline the cast of the political drama that follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's life from childhood to 2014, when he becomes Prime Minister of India. The show is available on Eros Now.

IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

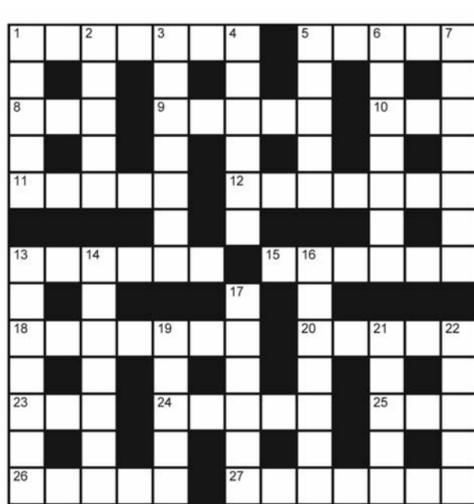


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Zinfandel, e.g. (3,4)
 - 5 Wizardry
 - 8 Salon application
 - 9 Concentrate
 - 10 Make public
 - 11 Point of greatest despair
 - 12 Kings and queens, e.g.
 - 13 Fish group
 - 15 Stiff
 - 18 West Indies music
 - 20 Cupcake topper
 - 23 Tolkien beast
 - 24 Trunk
 - 25 Meadow
 - 26 Obstreperous
 - 27 Computer screen
 - 6 Like some old trees
 - 7 Luggage designation (5,2)
 - 13 Assistance in time of difficulty
 - 14 Expression of surprise (4,3)
 - 16 Sinister
 - 17 Impassioned
 - 19 Trifling
 - 21 Arm of the sea
 - 22 Clutch

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.

D	4		B	C			2	A	
	5	7		6	E	C	D		
C	B	E		0					
	B			3	E	D	9	1	
1				4				8	
	1		8	B	0	6			
	6	0	E	1	8		9	A	
4	9	2	C	A	1			8	
C	D	9		4		1		2	
		6	3				C	4	7
3	A			2					
2			0	9	A				
			5		1		3	6	
		7	3	E	6		8	2	
9	5	A	8	B		C		7	0

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

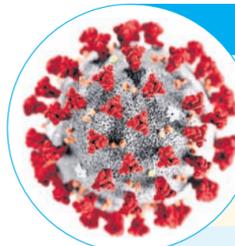
7	D	E	2	8	B	9	A	3	5	1	6	0	C	4
0	C	A	5	6	4	B	1	E	8	9	D	2	7	3
2	4	5	9	0	1	8	C	6	3	7	E	D	B	A
1	8	B	7	A	3	D	0	5	4	2	C	E	9	6
3	9	6	E	C	D	2	7	B	0	A	8	5	1	C
4	0	2	3	B	5	A	8	D	C	6	1	9	E	7
A	7	9	D	0	E	6	B	2	4	5	3	1	C	A
8	6	0	1	9	C	J	E	A	7	5	2	4	D	B
D	3	C	4	7	6	5	B	8	E	A	0	1	2	9
5	A	1	0	E	2	0	9	C	6	A	7	3	8	
9	E	4	B	3	A	7	D	2	1	C	8	6	0	5

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	8,88,21,567	6,37,79,575	19,12,311
India	1,04,13,417	1,00,37,398	1,50,570
Odisha	3,31,396	3,27,534	1,890

TAKING TO THE STREET

Activists of AIMSS hold a demonstration in front of the Sub-Collector's office in Bhubaneswar, Friday, seeking rollback of the new farm laws and fulfilment of other demands



Pradhan bats for Keonjhar-Delhi rail link

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 8: Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has written to Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal requesting railway service between Keonjhar and Delhi connecting Varanasi and Gaya.

In a letter to the Railway minister, Pradhan said that people of Keonjhar have expressed gratitude to your ministry for providing train linkage between Keonjhar and Puri.

"They have prayed for similar train services between Keonjhar-Gaya-Varanasi so that they would be able to visit holy sites in these places and further economic prospects of Keonjhar's self-help groups," Pradhan said.

Pradhan requested Piyush Goyal to start rail service between Keonjhar and Delhi connecting Gaya and Varanasi. He said it would help in economic development of the SHGs of the districts.

MV Act enforcement pushes helmet sales in City

AVIRAL MISHRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: With the city police cracking down on two-wheelers with helmetless pillion riders, the Capital headgear traders have witnessed booming sales during the last one week.

As per the provisions of the amended Motor Vehicles (MV) Act, the driving licence of the biker found with helmetless pillion riders would be suspended for three months. Moreover, the violation of the rule will also invite a penalty of ₹1,000 which would be imposed on the biker. The enforcement which came into effect January 1 has seen several people being fined in the city.

"With the new Act coming into

force, our sales have doubled since beginning of the New Year. Our shops are being crowded by customers for the last week. Customers have been enquiring and buying all kinds of helmets. We offer all brands of headgears ranging from ₹790 to ₹60,000, but the women and kids' model have been in great demand. We are expecting further increase in our sales," said Chhabindra Kumar Sahoo, manager at Kinetic Banadurga World.

The new Act and its enforcement have come as a great saviour for the Covid-hit helmet business in the city. As Sahoo mentioned, the sales have improved significantly only for the first time since March last year. "Even after the lockdown was over,



People buying helmets from a roadside vendor in Bhubaneswar

SAFETY FIRST

As per the provisions of the amended Motor Vehicles (MV) Act, the driving licence of the biker found with helmetless pillion riders would be suspended for three months

Violation of the rule will also invite a penalty of ₹1,000 which would be imposed on the biker

The new Act and its enforcement have come as a great saviour for the Covid-hit helmet business in the city

the vehicle movement and enforcement was weak. Thus, people were reluctant to invest on hel-

met," he added. Meanwhile, the act has also pushed sales of fake helmets in the city, with customers giving two hoots to the quality of headgears. The riders are buying headgears ranging between ₹250 and ₹300 without having any ISI hallmarks, only to hoodwink the authorities.

"I have brought two helmets - one for my 12-year-old son and another for my wife. Although I am aware of the need of wearing a quality helmet, I cannot afford to buy two helmets that are priced more than ₹1,000. Besides, I had already bought two branded helmets earlier for myself that got stolen. So, now I'm going for a non-branded one," said Sukanti Chand Behera, a resident of Patia here.

Temperature to dip from Jan 12

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: The Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre Friday said minimum temperature will dip in the state from January 12.

The temperature remained normal or above normal in almost all parts of the state during the past few days and it will continue for the next two to three days. After that, it will come down by 3 to 4 degrees Celsius, said director of the Met Centre, HR Biswas.

Forecasting dense fog January 10 morning, the Met Centre has issued yellow warning for Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jajpur and Bhadrak districts. Dense fog is also likely to prevail at one or two places of Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak, Cuttack and Kendrapara district, January 11 morning.

Meanwhile, the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena asked district Collectors concerned and transport commissioner to take necessary steps for controlling vehicular movement on highways to avoid road mishaps.

8 big infra, industrial projects reviewed

Chief Secretary asks officials concerned to ensure timely completion of all the projects



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: The Cabinet Committee on Investment (CCI)-Project Monitoring Group (PMG) Friday reviewed eight major infrastructure and industrial projects being implemented in the state.

The Committee reviewed the progress of four railway, two national highway, one power and one oil & gas projects envisaging investments to the tune of ₹26,620 crore.

The railway projects included Khurda-Bolangir new broad gauge rail link (289 km), 4th rail line between Budhapank- Salegaon (170 km), 3rd line between Vizianagaram-Sambalpur (264.6 km), and 3rd line between Rourkela-Jharsuguda (101 km). The reviewed road projects included Angul-Sambalpur toll road project and Singara-Binjabahal section of National Highway-6.

Besides, the panel took stock of Darlipalli Super Thermal Power Project stage-I (2X800 MW) and Paradip-Hyderabad product pipeline project.

Issues relating to forest clearance, compensatory afforestation, tree felling, disbursement of compensation wards, right of way were discussed and resolved during the meeting.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said, "The joint exercise

CCI-PMG MEET
The Committee reviewed the progress of four railway, two national highway, one power and one oil & gas projects envisaging investments to the tune of ₹26,620 crore

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has been very fruitful and there has been substantial progress in implementation of the projects. The ground level problems faced in one sector differs from the other. The progress and problems of each individual project are discussed and resolved through joint efforts."

He directed the project proponents and the executing departments to keep pace with timelines set against different phases of the projects.

The PMG led by Guruprasad Mohapatra, Secretary of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), extolled the state government as a performing state in many programmes including CCI projects.

"This Committee helps both the project proponents and the people through expeditious implementation of the projects. The interstate issues relating to the projects are also resolved in meetings of this committee," the secretary said.

FINALLY, CURTAINS RAISED



Youngsters watching a movie at Keshari Talkies in Bhubaneswar in strict adherence to Covid-19 norms, Friday. A few days ago, the state government allowed cinema halls to screen movies with all precautionary measures against the deadly virus

Imposter dupes City man of ₹ 94,000

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: A man from Capital city fell victim to a cyber crook and lost over ₹94,000 from his Google Pay account within 20 minutes Friday.

According to a source, a woman pretending to be an escort service worker managed to extort ₹94,000 from the man Friday. The matter came to light after the victim registered a complaint with Airfield police.

Sources said, the man received a call from an unknown number, a woman, who spoke to the man posing as an escort service worker. She asked the man to pay ₹2,000 through a digital wallet to avail her services.

However, when the man used his Google Pay account to pay the

Salesman bilks owner

Bhubaneswar: A salesman of a sanitary ware shop here fraudulently transferred ₹4 lakh from the owner's account by stealing her SIM card and debit card. The owner of the shop, Puja Agarwal, has lodged a complaint with Laxmisagar police here. According to the complaint, Agarwal's husband who deals with the business related transactions had gone to Raipur to attend to his ailing mother. Taking advantage of his absence, the accused worker named Ganesh Kumar Behera surreptitiously decamped with Agarwal's debit card and SIM card which she use for internet banking and other transactions. Subsequently, Behera reportedly bought some products online and transferred the rest to his account with a total withdrawal of ₹4 lakh from Agarwal's account.

money, the transaction failed following which she contacted the woman again through the phone number in which he had talked with her earlier. Then the woman sent him a barcode to scan and register. When the man used the

same, it didn't take even 20 minutes for her to swindle ₹94,731 from the Google Pay account of the victim.

The cops are yet to identify the accused. A detailed probe into the incident is on, a police official said.

IPS RESHUFFLE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: In a minor reshuffle, the state government Friday appointed former Director General of Police (DGP) and senior IPS officer Bijay Kumar Sharma as the Director of Directorate of Printing, Stationery & Publication in Cuttack. Sharma is currently posted as the OSD of Home department.

Similarly, IPS officer Himanshu Lal has been posted as the IG of Prisons and correctional services. Himanshu Lal has recently been promoted to the rank of Inspector General of Police (IGP).

17 political murders since 2017: Aparajita

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: BJP leader and Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha MP Aparajita Sarangi Friday asked the police department to give justice to the families of 17 BJP leaders who were murdered since 2017.

Aparajita said, "17 BJP leaders had been murdered in the state and all those murders were political murders since 2017. But justice has been a far cry in most of the cases."

"In 2017 panchayat elections, 14 BJP workers were killed. They were from Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Bhadrak, Koraput, Bolangir, Gajapati, Hinjli, Ganjam, Malkangiri, Kendrapara and Khurda," she said.

"In 2019 elections, in Badapokharia area of my constituency, one person from the party was also killed. Two more people were murdered in the state this year. We have demanded thorough investigation and justice in such cases," she said.

She also added, "The police have information about the cases but in many cases chargesheets have not been filed. I have requested the government to take action in such cases and give justice. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report claimed that Odisha is at the second slot when it comes to crimes against women."

3rd National Chilika Bird Festival kicks off

TOURISM AND FOREST & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENTS RENEW THEIR AGREEMENT FOR COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 3rd National Chilika Bird Festival through videoconferencing Friday.

Patnaik described the destination as "a pilgrimage for over a million winged visitors of varied species, which undertake flights to the mighty but calm Chilika Lake - Asia's largest brackish water lake." He applauded the efforts of Odisha Tourism and Ecotour Odisha for having organised the event which promises to add another feather to Odisha's cap - a soaring birding hub.

The three-day programme will witness participation of 55 selected birders representing nine states - Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and West Bengal, besides Odisha.

Offering a gist of the focused conservation campaign by the government, Chief Secretary Suresh Mohapatra said, "Chilika's Mangalajodi is a pioneering work in community-led conservation. It is an unparalleled birding desti-



Dignitaries at the inauguration ceremony of the 3rd National Chilika Bird Festival

nation. From protective actions like removing encroachments to the massive census exercise conducted a few days back, and promotional campaigns such as the Chilika Bird Festival - we jointly aspire to make Odisha - Chilika along with other niche destinations such as Satkosika, Bhitarkanika and Hirakud - the most sought-after birding destination of Asia-Pacific region. I take great pride in conveying that this year's census has revealed a total count of 11.42 lakh birds. I also convey our sincere gratitude to the census teams for the

phenomenal work."

On the government's roadmap to expand ecotourism, Mohapatra revealed about the plan to expand Ecotour Odisha's successful com-

munity-managed hospitality to over 100 camps in the coming years.

In a concurrent development, the Tourism and Forest & Environment departments renewed



A photo exhibition organised at the event, Friday

CHIEF MINISTER NAVEEN PATNAIK DESCRIBED THE DESTINATION AS A PILGRIMAGE FOR OVER A MILLION WINGED VISITORS OF VARIOUS SPECIES, WHICH UNDERTAKE FLIGHTS TO THE MIGHTY BUT CALM CHILIKA LAKE - ASIA'S LARGEST BRACKISH WATER LAKE

THE THREE-DAY PROGRAMME WILL WITNESS PARTICIPATION OF 55 SELECTED BIRDERS REPRESENTING NINE STATES - MAHARASHTRA, KARNATAKA, DELHI, HARYANA, TAMIL NADU, ANDHRA PRADESH, TELANGANA AND WEST BENGAL, BESIDES ODISHA

their agreements signed in March 2017. The objective is to tap and promote the state's ecotourism potential, thus creating alternative employment opportunities for local community.

Articulating a timely analogy, Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi said, "Who says foreign tourist arrivals is curtailed? Not for these winged guests that Odisha's pride, Chilika Lake, hosts every year. Birds metaphorically represent a quest for freedom from the immobility imposed by the pandemic - the world over."

Govt urges people to vaccinate against nCoV

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: The Health department Friday urged the people to go for mass vaccination when the Covid-19 vaccines arrive in the state in the coming days.

Interacting with the media, state Director of Medical Education and Training (DMEET) CBK Mohanty said, "I myself have planned to take the vaccine and vowed to get other health workers vaccinated. Vaccination is a step towards personal safety. The government has already given approval for the vaccine which has passed through several safety stages."

While trying to allay the fears among the people about the possible side effects of vaccines, the official said, "Many scientists have raised some concerns about side effects of vaccines but nothing has been proven yet on the issue. The talks of side effects of the vaccine could be a rumour."

He also cited reasons for making priority list for mass administration of vaccines.



Second dry run for Covid-19 vaccination underway at Urban Community Health Centre at Unit-IV in Bhubaneswar, Friday

Many scientists have raised some concerns about side effects of vaccines but nothing has been proven yet on the issue. The talks of side effects of the vaccine could be a rumour

CBK MOHANTY | DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

He said that the exact dates of vaccination in Odisha could not be predicted and depends largely on Union government's decisions. He also said that the survey and registration for other sections of the population will also start soon.

He also added, "I want to urge the people to not believe in any fake application talking about vaccine registration and supply. Till now there is no proposal to make the vaccines available in market. Now, the initiative will be done only through government route."

UPPING THE ANTE



BJP activists gherao the DGP office in Cuttack, Friday, seeking the arrest of all persons involved in Mahanga double murder case

State logs 245 new Covid cases, 2 deaths

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: Odisha's Covid-19 tally Friday mounted to 3,31,396 as 245 more people tested positive for the disease, while two fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,890, a Health and Family Welfare department official said.

Of the new cases, 141 were reported from various quarantine centres and 104 detected during contact tracing.

Bolangir district recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 40, followed by Sundargarh 29 and Khurda 25.

Seven districts - Ganjam, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput, Nabarangpur and Jagatsinghpur - did not report any new case since Thursday.

Taking to Twitter, the Health and Family Welfare department said, "Regret to inform the demise of two COVID positive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

The two fresh fatalities were reported from Khurda and Nayagarh districts, the official said.

Fifty-three Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities.

Khurda district, of which state



Of the new cases, 141 were reported from various quarantine centres and 104 detected during contact tracing

Bolangir district recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 40, followed by Sundargarh 29 and Khurda 25

The two fresh fatalities were reported from Khurda and Nayagarh districts

capital Bhubaneswar is a part, accounted for 328 fatalities, followed by Ganjam (247), Sundargarh (169), Cuttack (140) and Puri (117).

Odisha now has 2,163 active cases, while 3,27,290 patients have so far recovered from the disease.

The state has conducted over 71.11 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 24,482 Thursday, and the positivity rate stands at 4.66 per cent.

SOME CITY SCHOOLS TAKE MORE TIME TO REOPEN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: After waiting for over nine months, schools and colleges across Odisha reopened Friday. However, some schools in the city didn't open, saying they will reopen after taking all safety measures.

ODM Public School will open January 12. An official said, "We can't take any risk. Covid-19 is a serious matter and we can't take risk by opening the school without safety measures."

Similar views were shared by DAV Public School, Unit VIII, who also plans to open the school Monday. The sanitization process is going on in the school premises and will be ready for students by Monday.

Meanwhile, SAI International School resumed classes for students of Classes X and XII. It is after a gap of nine months that the schools have reopened in the state in compliance with the SOP issued by the state government.

Strict protocols were followed for students from wearing masks, washing hands at frequent intervals to mandatory social distancing, almost giving a formal colour to their first day in school as they reopened Friday.



Students attending classes at Sai International School in Bhubaneswar

The transport service also started as per the government guidelines. Buses began plying students from schools and got them dropped after classes. Designated personnel were in place to remain vigilant.

Students were brimming with excitement seeing their friends and teachers after a long gap. Nevertheless, the re-opening was approached in a staggered manner with multiple check points.

Students could resume classes in campuses only after submitting the consent letters from their parents. The classrooms, corridors and toilets were sanitized every two hours and classes were conducted for limited hours.

Bijaya Kumar Sahoo, founder and mentor of SAI International, was elated to welcome SALoneers of Classes X and XII. He said, "The school is finally open and we are ready to overcome all hurdles and function the way we did in pre-pandemic time. We hope that we are able to enlighten each mind with the power of education."

Students were welcomed back with Covid protocols including thermal screening, hand sanitising, wearing of masks and social distancing in classrooms.

At some places, rangolis were made to welcome students while at other institutions, flowers were presented.

CLASSIFIED

LOST

I, Rajendra Panda, S/o-Late Dilip Kumar Panda, At- Amajor, Bandigaon, Dist.- Kalahandi, have lost the Patta bearing Khata No. 171/3102, Plot No. 1098/5338, Mouza-Junagarh while I was engaged in marketing at Junagarh.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate Cuttack, Piyush Jyoti Prakash Parija & Piyusha Jyoti Prakash Parija is same and single person. Henceforth, I shall be known as Piyush Jyoti Prakash Parija for all necessary purpose.

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary Public, Junagarh, I, Rupesh Kumar Joshi, S/o Keshablal Joshi, At/P.O.-Chakuli, P.S.- Junagarh, Kalahandi declare that in land record Khata No. 215, 216, Mouza Chakuli my name is Chandiprasad Joshi & Rupesh Kumar Joshi is same person.

Govt seeks status report of projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: The state government has urged various departments to give status of infrastructure projects identified for completion under Zero Based Investment Review scheme during the current financial year.

Finance department has asked Works, Rural Development, Water Resources, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME),

Commerce & Transport, Skill Development & Technical Education and Fisheries & Animal Resources Development departments to submit reports regarding the progress made (till December end) on the projects by January 11.

"Kindly furnish the status of the projects up to December 31, 2020 costing Rs 1 crore & above and Rs 10 crore & above both spilled over and new projects identified for completion during 2020-21

under Zero Based Investment Review." Finance secretary AK Meena said in his letter to the departments.

Several infrastructure projects taken up by the government were languishing due to lack of monitoring and effective implementation.

The Zero Based Investment Review scheme was introduced in the year 2002-03 to complete of such projects within a specified time frame.

MATTER OF FAITH



People offer prayers at a mosque in Unit-IV area of Bhubaneswar as it reopened after remaining shut for several months due to the Covid-19 pandemic

NCPCR asks S&ME dept to help students sit for JNVST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: Acting on a complaint from Odisha Parents Federation, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) wrote to the school and mass education department to ensure students of satellite schools register themselves for admissions in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Selection Test-JNVST. The state government had shut many satellite schools in the state by way of merger with nearby bigger schools.

In the letter to principal secretary Satyabrata Sahu, the commission said they have received a complaint from Basudev Bhatt of Odisha Parents Federation on rationalisation and consolidation of schools under S&ME and implementation of guidelines for the policy of rationalization and consolidation of schools.

"It is alleged that students have been deprived of registration of their names for admission test in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Section Test due to merger and closing of schools in Odisha. It is also alleged that many parents did not get admissions in lead schools due to closing of schools for COVID-19.

Since it is a state specific issue, the panel requests you to look into the matter and take appropriate



ACCORDING TO THE FEDERATION, THE NUMBER OF SUCH SCHOOLS IDENTIFIED FOR CLOSURE IS 14,339 FOR THE YEAR 2020-21. THE LAST DATE OF ONLINE REGISTRATION OF JNVST TEST WAS DECEMBER 29, 2020

action in the best interest of the children and submit a report on action taken by your department in this regard within three weeks of issuance of this letter, the commission said.

Earlier, Odisha Parents Federation wrote a letter to Priyank Kanoongo, chairperson of NCPCR regarding deprivation of students for registration of satellite schools in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Selection Test (JNVST) for admission in Class VI due to merger of schools.

According to the federation, the number of such schools identified for closure is 14,339 for the year 2020-21. We have opposed this de-

cision of closure of schools. The last date of online registration of JNVST test was December 29, 2020. Due to merger our students have been deprived of registering their names for admission test, it said.

Lots of parents did not get admissions for their wards in lead schools from satellite schools due to closing of schools for Covid 19. The block education officers are very careless in this matter, it said.

We are concerned regarding participation of our students in JNV entrance examination for a better future. We demand your intervention and kindly order strong action against concerned DEOs and BEOs.

ODISHA PARENTS FEDERATION WROTE A LETTER TO PRIYANK KANOONGO, CHAIRPERSON OF NCPCR REGARDING DEPRIVATION OF STUDENTS FOR REGISTRATION OF SATELLITE SCHOOLS IN JNVST FOR ADMISSION IN CLASS VI DUE TO MERGER OF SCHOOLS

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Doyal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Man ends life after selling baby son

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Jan 8: A poverty-stricken man who could not bear the grief of selling his four-month-old son committed suicide. The incident occurred at Saptadhara village under Mathili police limits in Malkangiri district Thursday. The incident came to the knowledge of people Friday. The deceased has been identified as Somnath Khila. He has left behind his wife and five children.

Somnath had been under mental distress for several months as he was not able to meet the family expenses. Poverty forced him to sell his four-month old son to a neighbour a few days back. He thought that it would reduce the financial burden on him. But that did not happen. A sense of guilty encompassed him and it led him to commit suicide. Somnath's widow Kuni Khila and her four children now have no one to look after them. She has appealed to the district administration to help them out. However, questions are being asked as to how the district administration and the Childline were ignorant about the sale of the kid. Many feel that Somnath wouldn't have taken the drastic step if the administration had come to his rescue in time.

Minor arrested for raping disabled kin

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rairangpur, Jan 8: Police Friday arrested a minor boy for raping his physically-challenged niece who is also a minor. The incident was reported from Kuladidaha village under Gorumahishani police limits in Mayurbhanj district.

The victim's parents were busy working in their farmland. Finding her alone, her uncle approached her and took her to the backside of the paddy field and committed the crime with threats to her life. Out of fear, she did not reveal her ordeal before her family. But her minor brother who had seen the act told his parents. Her parents sought the help of the local ward member and lodged a police complaint. Police arrested the minor.

Maoist camp busted; arms seized in Kandhamal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kandhamal, Jan 8: Security jawans Friday busted a Maoist camp and seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition after a gunfight with the ultras near Lengiramunda village in Chakapada block bordering Kandhamal and Ganjam.

Agrawal said grenades, detonators, splinters, explosives, wires, medicine, clothes and other camp articles were seized. Acting on a tip-off, SOG and BSF jawans and District Voluntary Force (DVF) teams carried out an anti-Maoist operation in the jungle. Seeing the forces, the Red rebels opened fire at the

jawans. In retaliation, the jawans too opened fire at them. The exchange of fire continued for around half an hour till the ultras turned tail and escaped into the jungle.

Notably, BSF jawans December 19 had recovered a powerful landmine in Pipalpadar area in Malkangiri district.

Vanishing sal forests hit tribals' livelihood

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kamakshynagar, Jan 8: Tribals in remote pockets of Dhenkanal are worried over their livelihood as they live on collection and sales of minor forest produce. The gradually vanishing sal forests have impacted their age-old profession.

Lack of marketing facilities for MPFs including sal leaves forces the tribals to sell their items for a pittance, a report said.

Their life is always fraught with dangers from wild animals. Yet, they stick to forests as they earn their living from minor forest produce.

Thousands of tribal families living in Baunsapal, Kadua, Mahulapal, Saruali and Barua under Kamakshyanagar block; Batagan, Balikuma, Kankadahada and Kanthei panchayats under Kankadahada block depend on forests. They collect MPFs like sal leaves, shiali leaves, and wild grass for brooms, lac and resins.

Mostly women make different items like plates and cups from these leaves. They sell them in the market every day. "Earlier, we earned well, but now we are unable to get price for half of our labour invested in leaf collection and sale," some tribals lamented.



Lack of marketing facilities for MPFs including sal leaves forces tribals to sell these items to traders for a pittance

Thousands of tribal families living in Baunsapal, Kadua, Mahulapal, Saruali and Barua under Kamakshyanagar block; Batagan, Balikuma, Kankadahada and Kanthei panchayats under Kankadahada block depend on forests. They collect MPFs like sal leaves, shiali leaves, and wild grass for brooms, lac and resins

Mostly women make different items like plates and cups from sal leaves. They sell them in the market every day. "Earlier, we earned well, but now we are unable to get the price for half of our labour invested in leaf collection and sale," some tribals lamented

In the absence of marketing facilities, traders take advantage of tribals who sell the MPFs at throwaway prices.

"Thermocol, plastic plates and cups are now flooded in the market. They are widely used in festivals, marriage and thread ceremonies. They are gradually replacing leaf plates made by us," they lamented.

Shiali lata (a wild creeper) is gradually vanishing in forests due to frequent wildfires. Besides, timber mafia has been looting sal trees, thus making it difficult for them to

get sal leaves. "Quality sal leaves are not available these days while elephant menace often keeps them away from venturing deeper into forests for leaf collection. Traders come near us and buy the leaves at cheap prices. They make plates from those leaves with machines," they added.

They demanded that there is a need for marketing support from the government. Nagi Tudu, a tribal resident of Karadabani (Kanpur) said three to four years ago he used to earn Rs 300 a day from selling sal

leaves. Now, it is difficult to make even Rs 200 in two days.

"Sal forests used to be near village. We would not have to go far to collect leaves. Sal leaves were available in abundance. Timber mafia has been cutting down sal trees, making leave scarce," Dhani Marandi, a tribal resident of Baunsapal, said.

Sauri Murmu, a resident of Baunsapal, said as marketing facility in the locality is absent, they are unable to get right price for sal leaves. Traders are taking advantage by paying a pittance.

TIGER ON THE PROWL

Nuapada villagers clamour for help

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tarbood, Jan 8: Panic gripped residents of Bharuamunda village under Komana forest range in Nuapada district as a tiger has strayed into the locality. The villagers are so terrified that they have stopped letting out their domestic animals for grazing. After sunset, the village has a deserted look.

The villagers still remember how a tiger had taken away a child while she was sleeping with her mother at Haladi village in 2018. The forest department officials had captured the tiger and relocated it to Nandankanan Zoo in Bhubaneswar. Bharuamunda village is five kilometres from Komana forest range. Locals said the tiger is roaming in the locality in search of food.

According to Naveen Majhi, a villager, he had taken his goats and sheep for grazing to Chandol hill Sunday. It was about 11 am when the tiger suddenly pounced on the herd. Seeing the marauding



animal, Naveen rushed back to the village seeking help. When other villagers armed with bows and arrows and spears reached the spot, the tiger had disappeared. In the meantime, the tiger had killed a couple of goats.

Tuesday night also the predator killed a bullock of Dolamani Majhi. Similarly, the big cat strayed into the village and attacked a cow at Banabasi Majhi's shed. The panicked villagers have urged the forest department to take steps to relocate the wild animal. Contacted, Komana forest ranger, Jagdish Duria confirmed the presence of the tiger in the area, saying, "We keep a watch on its movement and steps are being taken to catch it."

Ganjam: Asst Collector accused of bribe, Collector orders probe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 8: Assistant Collector and grievance cell in-charge, Banamali Satapathy, in Ganjam district has been accused of allegedly accepting bribe of Rs 2,00,000 from a woman applicant to accord a drug license to her.

The woman wanted her money back as she did not get the license. It has been alleged that the accused has paid back Rs 1.70 lakh. An argument between the two took place Thursday afternoon over the return

of the remaining amount. The video of the argument has gone viral on social media. The woman has been identified as Sipararani Jena of Banivihar residential area under Aska NAC limits.

Sipararani's father previously owned a medicine shop in Aska town. Following the death of her father, she applied to the Berhampur deputy drug controller (south zone) for transfer of existing drug license to her mother's name in order to facilitate the change of ownership of the

shop. She approached the grievance cell when her application was turned down. It was then Satapathy demanded a bribe of Rs 2,00,000 to effect the change in the name of the license. However, he did not do the job as promised. The woman then approached District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange for proper action. On coming to know about the alleged demand for bribe, Kulange requested the government to give compulsory retirement to the accused. The Collector has also ordered a department-

tal inquiry against Satapathy and asked for a probe by the Vigilance department.

EAST COAST RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM-1
NECESSARY MODIFICATION HAS BEEN MADE IN TENDER NOTICE No. ETCPM/IV/SKP2020063, Dated: 10.12.2020
Date and time of closing of tender as published: 1200 hrs of 11.01.2021.
Now to be read as: 1200 hrs of 18.01.2021.
All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.
The intending tenderer(s) are advised to go through the corrigendum from the website <http://www.tenders.ori.nic.in> and to quote their e-offer accordingly.
Chief Administrative Officer(Con)/ Bhubaneswar
PR-475/L/20-21

PURI KONARK DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, PURI
V.I.P. ROAD, PURI
Auction Notice No.11/PKDA, Puri, Dtd.08.1.2021
1 (One) No. of flat of 'D' category in Nandighosh Enclage, Goudabada Sahi, Puri Town, Dist.- Puri is for sale through auction. For details please visit www.pkdapuri.in or www.puri.nic.in. The last date of receipt of sealed application is fixed to 10.2.2021.
By order of Vice-Chairman
Sd./- SECRETARY

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUNDARGARH (R&B) DIVISION, SUNDARGARH
E-mail ID: pwd_sng@yahoo.co.in, Tel./Fax: (06622) 272230
"e" - Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.EE-R&B-SNG-64 of 2020-21
No.B-621:- Letter No.70/WE Date: 05.01.21
1. The Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in single cover system on ONLINE mode from eligible contractors with valid licences for construction of building works (including EI & PH works) as detailed in DTCN.
2. Nature of works : Building works
3. No. of work : 03 (Three) Nos.
4. Tender cost : Rs.6,000/-
5. Class of contractor : 'D', 'C', 'B' & 'A' class contractor
6. Availability of bid document : From 10.00 A.M. of date 13.01.2021 to 05.00 P.M. of date 22.01.2021.
7. Date of opening of bid : 11.00 A.M. on Dt.25.01.2021
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>). Any addendum / corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the website said only.
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division
OIPR-34043/11/0030/2021

No. A-449 (e mail = ee.dd.bam@gmail.com)
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, DRAINAGE DIVISION, BERHAMPUR
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
e-procurement Notice No. 01 /2020-21 Dt : 31.12.2020
1. Type of work : Improvement of Drainage Channel
2. Total number of works : 1 No. work
3. Estimated Cost of Individual Packages : Rs.84.19 Lakhs
4. Bid Identification No. : EE-DD-BER-NO. 01 /2020-21
5. Period of completion : 04 (Four) working Calendar months
6. Availability of Tender : 12.01.2021, 10.00 hours to 21.01.2021, On - Line : 17.00 hours.
7. Date of Opening : Technical Bid: 22.01.2021 at 11.30 hours & Financial Bid:27.01.2021 at 12.30PM in the O/o the Executive Engineer, Drainage Division, Berhampur, Ganjam, Odisha.
8. Procurement Officer : Executive Engineer, Drainage Division, Berhampur, Ganjam, Odisha.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Executive Engineer
Drainage Division , Berhampur
OIPR-32092/11/0001/2021

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, L.I. DIVISION, JAJPUR ROAD
e-mail – ee.li.jajpurroad@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 26 / OLIC (JPR) / Dt. 07.01.2021
No. CAD-1047:- The Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Jaipur Road on behalf of Odisha Lift Irrigation Corporation Limited , Bhubaneswar invites percentage Rate bids for installation of pumpsets and Engrisection of Shallow Projects on turnkey basis from reputed Contractors/Firms having valid HT license issued by E.L.B.O. Odisha, with experience in similar nature of works for the work of Erection of 11KV line, L.T. line & commissioning of electrical Substation for power supply to L.I. Projects along with installation of pump set, starter with other equipments including Civil works and energisation of shallow tube well project. The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the Bid.
1. Numbers of Package : 8 Nos.
2. Estimated Cost : 29,572 lakh to 43,313 lakh
3. Cost of tender paper : Rs.6000/-(D.D)+5% GST in shape of challan on OLIC GST No. 21AAACO5986G12F
4. Date & time of publication : Dt. 18.01.21 From 10:00 A.M.
5. Date & time of closing : Dt. 26.01.21 At 05:00 P.M.
6. Date & time of opening of bid : Dt. 28.01.21 from 11:00 A.M.
7. The bidders have to participate in online bidding only.
Further details can be seen from the website www.tenders.ori.nic.in. Addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender if any, can be seen in the said website.
OIPR-32146/11/0005/2021
Sd./- Er. S.R. Panda, Executive Engineer

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BHUBANESWAR
Ph.No.-0674-2301787, Fax No.: 0674-2300965, E mail ID: eerw_bbsr@yahoo.co.in
No.:Tender-Online-BBSR Divn.-18 Date: 5.1.2021
e-Procurement NOTICE
No. O-864:-
1. Name of the work : Periodical Maintenance of road works
2. Total No. of package : 1 No.
3. Class of contractor :
(a) Estimated cost more than Rs.40.00 lakhs & not exceeding to Rs.1.50 crore : 'A' & 'B' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities.
(b) Estimated cost more than Rs.20.00 lakhs & not exceeding to Rs.40.00 lakhs : 'B' & 'C' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities.
(c) Estimated cost not exceeding to Rs.20.00 lakhs : 'C' & 'D' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities.
4. Estimate cost of individual projects : Rs.19.80 lakhs
5. Time for completion : 2(Two) calendar months
6. Other details :
Procurement Officer : Bid Identification No. : Availability of tender online for bidding : Date & time of opening of tender
1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bhubaneswar : Tender Online-BBSR Divn.-18 : 10.1.2021 at 11.00 A.M. : 22.01.2021 upto 5.00 P.M. : 25.01.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
OIPR-25066/11/0017/2021
Sd./-Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, BBSR

Kainjhari waterfall cries for tourism tag

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 8: Mineral rich Keonjhar district is gifted with a number of scenic waterfalls and spots, but many of them have failed to draw attention of tourists for lack of development. All of them have potential to attract footfalls if they are equipped with necessary infrastructure. One of them is breathtaking Kainjhari waterfall in Bilarigotha hill near Talabali under Bansapal block.



Gonasika road and then to Barahagad Chhak. From there, go to Talabali village.

This place offers breathtaking view of sylvan setting – water cascading down from a hill cliff measuring 40 ft height. Its water flows into a stream. Down the stream, there are five more beautiful waterfalls.

The area is filled with dense forests. The area marked with towering hills and sprawling rocky floors looks ethereal as sunlight can't penetrate through thick foliage. The water from all the five waterfalls flows down into a gorge. The place is most enjoyable by sitting on rocky floors all around.

Scores of locals and people from other areas through the area for picnicking. Locals say, the place is more beautiful and attractive than Sanghagara waterfall. They observed that if the government grants tourism

tag to the place, it would emerge as one of the tourist draws in the district.

Basically the development of the place would boost tribal tourism as the area is habitied by primitive tribes like Juanga.

Experts say, if one travels through Hatishila, Baragad and other Juanga villages in the peripheral area, it would give him a feel of Darjeeling and Shimla, given its cool sylvan atmosphere. Local environmentalist Harekrushna Mohant said that the area is rich with valuable medicinal herbs. The place deserved tourism tag with development of basic infrastructure. "We have taken up the issue with the SFO," he added.

District tourism officer Ramesh Chandra Nayak said that the place is quite beautiful and steps will be taken to seek tourism tag to the place.

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଝରିଗାଁ
ଝରିଗାଁ-ନବରଙ୍ଗପୁର, ଓଡ଼ିଶା
Office of The Panchayat Samiti, Jharigam District- Nabarangpur (Odisha)
At/P.O.-Jharigam, Pin-764076, Phone: 06867-256614
E-mail:ori-jharigaon@nic.in
No.4088/2020 Date 30.12.2020
TENDER CALL NOTICE
The Block Development Officer, Jharigam invites sealed tenders in conformity with detailed tender call notice to be drawn up in State P.W.D. P-1 contract from the eligible registered contractors of State P.W.D./Irrigation/R.W./R.W.S.S. and P.H.E.D. having valid licence from competent authority for Civil Works. The proof of registration from appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the Bid. If successful, the bidder who has not registered under State Government, Odisha has to register under the State PWD in appropriate class of eligibility before signing of the agreement. The bidders may submit bids for the following works:
Sl. No. Name of the work Amount put to tender (In Rs.) EMD to be deposited @1% (In Rs.) Cost of tender documents (Non-refundable) (In Rs.) Class of contractor Time of completion
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1 Construction of Labour Room at PHC, Dhodra. 25,29,606/- 25300/- 6000/- C or B 05 (Five calendar months)
2 Construction of Labour Room at PHC, Ichhapur. 25,29,606/- 25300/- 6000/- C or B 05 (Five calendar months)
Date of tender paper available : 30.12.2020 to 07.01.2021 (Tender paper to be downloaded from official website www.nabarangpur.nic.in).
Last date of receipt of tender paper : 12.01.2021 (During office hour through Registered Post/Speed Post only) addressed to the Block Development Officer, Jharigam, AT/P.O.- Jharigam, Dist.- Nabarangpur, PIN-764076.
Date of opening of tender paper : 13.01.2021 (Time 11.00 A.M.) at Block Office, Jharigam. Bid documents consisting of schedule of quantities & the set of terms & conditions of contract & other necessary documents can be downloaded from official website (www.nabarangpur.nic.in).
Sd./- Block Development Officer
Jharigam

Perfect health, sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self control are all things that are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches. SRI AUROBINDO

War of words

IPS officer D Roopa, who was the first woman home secretary of Karnataka, has been transferred as the managing director of Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation amid her public spat with another IPS officer Hemant Nimbalkar...

Public spats are rarely pretty and the one between these two senior IPS officers of Karnataka over the tender process to procure CCTVs has brought out in the open the intense rivalries in the service...

Roopa had written to state Chief Secretary TM Vijaya Bhaskar alleging that Nimbalkar was trying to favour a private company in the Bengaluru Safe City Project and demanded a probe against Nimbalkar...

As the two trade charges, sources say that the government has started an inquiry in the matter. Expect more salvos in the days ahead!



BABUDOM BYTES Dilip Cherian

Khemka digs in his heels Haryana IAS officer and whistleblower Ashok Khemka never gives up on his first principles.

Now Principal Secretary in the state's Archaeological Department, the indefatigable Khemka continues to pursue the case which brought him into the national limelight.

He had sought information relating to the inquiry commission that probed the grant of change of land use licences in Gurgaon during the Congress government, including the alleged role of Robert Vadra...

The commission has now issued notice to the office of Chief Secretary (Political Department) and the Town and Country Planning Department...

J&K babus defy instructions The government has taken serious note of several IAS officers of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre openly flouting instructions on the online filing of Immovable Property Returns (IPRs)...

According to sources, online filing of IPRs was introduced in 2017. In terms of the extant rules, the babus have to necessarily file IPRs electronically...

But much to the disappointment of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) and the General Administration Department (GAD), several IAS officers have not acted on the instructions issued repeatedly since 2017...

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

- Write it. Shoot it. Publish it. Crochet it, sauté it, whatever. MAKE. JOSS WHEDON
Do one thing every day that scares you. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
Hold the vision, trust the process. UNKNOWN

WORDSWORTH

Bridie I know the word, but had to look it up to double-check the usual spelling, which is the slightly different bride. It's in Chambers Dictionary and the New Oxford Dictionary of English (NODE) but not in many American equivalents...

LOL

Relative's name Black guys is walking through the woods, he starts to hear a sounds. It goes ching chong wu. So he starts to walk to wear he heard the sound. Soon enough he comes across a Chinese guy and a river. The Black guy asks what that noise was.



FOCUS US SPIES

RETURN OF US INTELLIGENCE

Tradition has it that when less-than-beloved CIA station chiefs are transferred from their posts abroad, their long-suffering staff celebrates with a wheels-up party. If tradition still holds, champagne corks were popping at CIA headquarters when Donald Trump lost his presidential re-election bid to Joe Biden.



Kent Harrington

BIDEN HAS SELECTED A SEASONED TEAM WHOSE LEADING MEMBERS ARE ALREADY WELL KNOWN TO ONE ANOTHER AND TO THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

By contrast, as a former Vice President and Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Biden is by all accounts a knowledgeable and appreciative consumer of intelligence.

Moreover, Biden has selected a seasoned team whose leading members are already well known to one another and to the intelligence community.

One obvious problem for intelligence leaders will be the lasting effects of Trump's chaotic, destructive approach to foreign policy, which has included personal attacks on NATO leaders...

And eroded relationships are only part of the problem. By attacking his own intelligence officers and attempting to politicise their work, Trump has undermined the agencies' morale...



It is no secret that America's intelligence services have been in the crosshairs of one of the most ignorant, paranoid, and antagonistic Presidents ever to have held the office. Trump wore his distrust of spies and intelligence analysts on his sleeve...

lines in September, when he declassified reports suggesting that Hillary Clinton had colluded with the Kremlin in her 2016 presidential race. These reports had already been flagged by US intelligence experts as likely Russian disinformation.

The DNI's office isn't the only place where Biden's team will need to restore professional intelligence standards. A similar effort is also urgently needed at the CIA and other agencies...

Trump's minions most likely will continue to overstep their remit on their way out. Last month, for example, Ratcliffe issued a hysterical warning about China in a commentary for the Wall Street Journal.

This politicisation of intelligence on China wasn't Ratcliffe's first or worst offense. His irresponsible behavior also made head-

whistleblower's complaint to Capitol Hill.

For the CIA rank and file, words matter. By offering only silence, these intelligence leaders sent a signal that laws, professional oaths, and institutional obligations are a dead letter.

The value of intelligence for policymakers depends not just on the relevance and accuracy of the raw data, but also on the objectivity of the analysis that makes sense of it.

Nearly 35 years ago, when former FBI director William H. Webster was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to lead the CIA following the Iran-Contra scandal...

"Among the increasingly intricate arsenals across the world," Stephenson wrote, "intelligence is an essential weapon, perhaps the most important. But it is, being secret, the most dangerous. Safeguards to prevent its abuse must be devised, revised, and rigidly applied."

A man of superb reputation, Webster stressed the importance of integrity. Biden's intelligence nominees would be wise to do the same at their own confirmations...

Kent Harrington, a former senior CIA analyst, served as national intelligence officer for East Asia, chief of station in Asia, and the CIA's director of public affairs.

SPECTRUM DEVELOPMENT

Let the great transition begin

With Covid-19 vaccinations underway in some countries and efforts to expand access still ongoing, world leaders will soon shift their attention from crisis response to pandemic recovery.

Putting aside budget constraints, we have just seen that the pre-pandemic normal had dire implications for the world. Our strained interactions with the environment helped introduce the coronavirus to humans...

Instead of aiming to restore that pre-2020 way of life, our leaders should set their sights on creating a different, better world. Fortunately, they already have a roadmap in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)...

that all countries have committed to achieve by 2030.

When originally adopted in 2015, the SDGs aimed to double down on a previous generation's progress by eradicating extreme poverty, reversing the scourge of environmental degradation, and decisively reducing inequality.

Looking ahead, the immediate challenge is to adapt to our new conditions while charting a course toward a better destination. Through our own work with 17 Rooms, a global community of experts collaborating to identify practical next steps for each SDG, we have identified four "transitions" to help guide us.

The first such transition concerns equal justice. Developments in 2020 shed new light on longstanding social and economic inequities faced by women, minorities, low-income workers, and

victims of state-sponsored violence, among many other groups. Tackling the roots of inequality requires deep and persistent commitments to economic and social progress for every segment of society.

The second major shift is toward "blue-green" replenishment. For too long, natural capital (the environment) has been valued only at the margins. But the pandemic has shown that an imbalance between nature and humans in one part of the world can upend systems everywhere.

The third transition is toward inclusive systems for technological innovation. In recent decades, sleek, shiny consumer electronics have typically garnered the most attention. But the crises of 2020 have underscored the need for both equitable access to technology and public trust in new solutions.

Finally, none of these political, economic, environmental, and technological shifts can succeed without

an equally large-scale generational transition. The Covid-19 crisis hasn't just exposed the shortcomings of current leaders; it has also jeopardized the life prospects of hundreds of millions of young people.

A generational transition can start with many small-scale initiatives. For example, government ministers can set joint investment strategies with kids who have been shut out of school, and universities can deploy their newly implemented online learning systems to help communities develop new skills for local jobs.

As the world begins to recover from the deep strains of 2020, many will be tempted to pick up where everything left off before crisis hit. But doing so would miss the point. We need 2021 to mark the start of a great transition.

Zia Khan is senior vice-president for Innovation at The Rockefeller Foundation. John W. McArthur is Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at the Brookings Institution.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID.

Trump's destructive legacy

Sir, Apropos, news item, "US Capitol turns warzone", OrissaPost, January 8. The shocking scenes without precedent in US politics, pro-Trump rioters stormed the US Capitol as Congress was meeting to ceremonially certify the Electoral College votes and confirm Joe Biden as the next US president.

TRS on bouncy track

Sir, After the TRS party's poll verdict in Dubbaka and GHMC elections and ever since the KCR's Delhi visit in the aftermath of recent elections, there is a see-saw change in KCR's attitude in taking policy decisions.

Soon enough he comes across a Chinese guy and a river. The Black guy asks what that noise was. The Black guy says let me try. He throws a quarter in and the river says, chimpanzee.



Have cracks emerged in Gupkar alliance?

The first voice of dissidence came from Basharat Bukhari of the NC who publicly challenged the PAGD leadership to roll out the 'road map' of getting back Article 370 and statehood

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 8: The alliance of seven valley-based political parties, including the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has begun to develop cracks after a senior Kashmiri leader's recent visit to New Delhi. Heading a regional party, the leader is said to have met with the top functionaries in the Union Ministry of Home Affairs including Home Minister Amit Shah.



Constitution and the flag of Jammu and Kashmir and the Statehood. That all stand snatched away," Bukhari has pointed out and asked the senior leadership to delineate the path of realising the goal of Article 370 and statehood.

Over a dozen of leaders, associated with different constituents, have raised questions asking why there was no electoral alliance on the 140 seats in Jammu and why several members of the constituents had contested elections against one another in Kashmir. Those who contested the PAGD's NC nominees include PDP's Women's wing president Safeena Baig in Wagora Baramulla and PDP General Secretary Nazir Ahmad Khan in Beerwah. Senior PDP leader and former Minister Ghulam Nabi Hanjura's candidates fought NC's official candidates in four segments of Budgam district.

PC's vice president and a former Minister Abdul Gani Vakili

has demanded "necessary action" against the rebels and the proxies who contested against the official candidates of the PAGD.

In a statement Vakili has said that the alliance parties fielded proxy candidates and reduced the DDC elections to a joke. "No doubt the Gupkar Alliance did well in the elections but the expectation was to sweep the polls which could not happen as the leadership lacked sincerity. Why did we get so less seats in Kashmir valley is something the leadership must ask themselves", he added.

Vakili said the PC president, with whom he claimed to have held four meetings expressing his apprehensions, should introspect whether there was any sincerity in the alliance.

"Again I asked him today which party he was fighting on the ground. Almost on all seats you were fighting your ally National Conference. The reality is all of us fought each

other on the ground. We wanted to sweep the polls but got very few seats. What was the purpose of lying to the people and telling them we were in an alliance when in the majority of the cases there was no alliance? The results are there for everybody to see. And even today nobody is willing to speak the truth. We talk of an alliance in Srinagar while in villages, our workers fight it out against each other," Vakili asserted.

Vakili said that in a letter to his party president he had already expressed these apprehensions which, according to him, came true. He asked Lone to immediately call a meeting for introspection. "We shouldn't mislead the people."

The valley-based alliance, known as Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), which contested the district elections on the plank of defeating the BJP and keeping it away from power in J&K, has bagged 110 seats out of 280. Farooq Abdullah's National Conference (NC), Mehbooba Mufti's PDP and Sajad Gani Lone's Peoples Conference (PC) are its key constituents.

The BJP and the NC have emerged as the first and the second largest party with 75 and 67 seats respectively but no party or alliance has achieved the magic figure of 141 seats. There were 14 seats in each of the J&K's 20 districts - 10 each in Kashmir and Jammu. While Lone has not spoken much, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti have claimed the DDC results as a 'victory' for PAGD.

SC to hear plea against Kerala churches' mandatory confessions

A group of Christian women questions the practice of compulsory confessions, terming the practice as violative of the Constitutional rights to freedom of religion and privacy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 8: The Supreme Court Friday agreed to hear a PIL by a group of Christian women from Kerala questioning the practice of compulsory confessions in the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, terming the practice as violative of the constitutional rights to freedom of religion and privacy.



A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde and comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian allowed petitioner Bina Titty and others to amend the petition to bring some additional facts in the matter.

At the outset, the bench asked senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing a group of five women, why didn't he move the Kerala High Court, and he replied that the apex court had already referred to similar questions, which were framed in the Sabarimala judgment, for consideration by a nine-judge Constitution bench. Since the issue is pending in the top court, the High Court could not have heard the matter, Rohatgi said.

Attorney General KK Venugopal, representing the Centre, however, contended that the issue has emerged from the dispute in Malankara church, which the apex court settled in 2017, and the High Court concerned can deal with the matter.

Rohatgi submitted that the male priests have abused the confessions

made by the women, and added that the matter is connected with constitutional importance, if confession is an essential religious practice. He argued that it is also important to examine that if it violated the right to privacy.

After a brief hearing in the matter, Rohatgi asked the top court to allow him to amend the petition and to bring more facts on record.

The plea, filed through advocate Mohit D. Ram, has argued that confession involves laying bare all secrets of the confessor which he/she believes to be sinful. "However, much to the dismay of the petitioners, in the present case, the priest, part from being not faithful to the sect of the petitioners, has also misused his position as the priest and indulged in acts of blackmailing the members of the parish," the plea said.

The petitioners have argued that in certain cases, priests have even

sought sexual favours from the female members of the parish. "The petitioners and similarly placed persons need to confess before a priest of their own choice," added the plea.

December 14, a bench headed by the Chief Justice had sought response from the Centre, the Kerala government and high functionaries of the church on the plea challenging the alleged practice of forced and mandatory confession from every of its members.

The plea was filed by Mathew T Mathachan, Shaji PJ and Jose CV, through advocate Sanand Ramakrishnan.

"This pernicious practice of forced, compulsory and mandatory confession (not being voluntary) from every member both men and women is causing several other problems, including sexual exploitation of women and blackmailing," said the plea.

BOAT RIDE



People row boats on the famous Dal Lake to reach their destination after a recent snowfall in Srinagar, Friday.

Spurt in Covid cases due to robust surveillance: Min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 8: After managing to flatten the Covid-19 curve within months of reporting the country's first coronavirus case last year, Kerala is now grappling with a sharp surge in its daily infections, prompting the Centre to send a high-level team to assist it.

However, the state government maintains the 'high numbers' are a result of robust surveillance and reporting system, while pointing to its low fatality rate.

Close to 40,000 cases have been reported from the southern state in the last week alone, with a daily addition of around 5,000, even as its neighbours and other high prevalence states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have started seeing a reversal.

As of Thursday, Kerala recorded 5,051 new coronavirus cases, including four UK returnees and 5,638 recoveries as the total caseload inched towards the eight lakh mark. The toll stood at 3,234 while the active cases are nearly 65,000.

"The rise in the number of cases in the state is due to a robust surveillance and reporting system. We managed to delay the peak of the pandemic and upgraded the threshold of our health system. Our ultimate aim is to save the lives of the people and reduce the mortality rate. Even with this high number



DELAYED PEAK

The state saw the virus curve flatten in April-May last year, even as it witnessed an increase in the cases later in the wake of the return of Keralites from abroad following the lockdown

By delaying the peak of the pandemic, the government increased the number of ICUs, ventilators in the hospitals and oxygen supply has been ensured to all beds

Public Health officials of the state say the percentage of active cases is high in Kerala because of the state's discharge policy which stipulates that the patient should record a negative result before discharge

of cases, we managed to reduce the death rate," Health Minister KK Shailaja told PTI.

She said the upward graph could also be attributed to the recently concluded local body polls, swept by the ruling CPI(M)-led LDF.

Shailaja said Kerala managed to maintain a very low case fatality rate in the state even as it was in a vulnerable position with high population density, high number of old-age population and the most number of diabetic patients.

"Yes there is an increase in cases due to the recently concluded local body polls and all. But we need to understand that the pandemic is

still here and the lockdown restrictions were eased. The most scientific method of approach in connection with a pandemic is to delay the peak of it."

"Many nations faced a shortage of beds as the cases peaked and choked their health system resulting in high mortality rates," she added.

When asked about the state accounting for over 25 per cent of new cases in the country, she said "it is meaningless to say that Kerala's situation is worse."

"In certain other states, when they reached the peak of the pandemic, thousands had lost their

lives and their health systems were choked. It is meaningless to say that Kerala's situation is worse as we have a high number of positive cases. They are not considering the case fatality rate. Look at the example of Dharavi (in Mumbai). They have done a good job there. But the pandemic was contained there after nearly 400 deaths," the minister said.

On the Centre deputation a team, headed by the Director of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr S K Singh to support public health interventions for COVID-19 management in Kerala, Shailaja welcomed the move.

'Filament-less' Kerala way to fight global warming: CM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 8: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said that a 'filament-less' Kerala is the alternative to reduce global warming, adding that conservation of energy is as important as generation.

The Chief Minister was delivering his inaugural address during distribution of LED bulbs in the

state through video conference.

Vijayan said that production and promotion of LED bulbs is the policy of the state government. He said that 1 crore LED bulbs are being distributed to 17 lakh consumers who have registered with the state electricity board. He also added that consumers who require LED bulbs can again register with the board.

He said that the project 'Nilavu

on converting street lamps under local self governments to LED is a major success.

State Power Minister M.M. Mani said that the government is providing a warranty of 3 years for LED bulbs.

The 'filament-less' project is the main project under 'Energy Kerala Project' and the idea is to bring down the usage of mercury lamps and instead promote LED bulbs.

Oppn UDF boycotts Guv's address to House

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 8: The budget session of the Kerala Assembly began on a stormy note Friday as opposition UDF staged a protest against Speaker P Sreeramakrishnan over dollar the smuggling case and boycotted the policy address by Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, who flayed the contentious central farms laws.

Sticking to the policy address of the CPIM-led LDF government, Khan read out in full the remarks against the farm laws, against which the assembly had passed an unanimous resolution December 31.

In his two hour and ten minutes-long address, he also attacked the central investigating agencies, probing various allegations against the state government programmes, saying they have "overstepped the constitutional contours".

As Khan began his address, the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) members, who came with banners and posters, raised slogans against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the Speaker levelling various allegations.



They demanded the resignation of the Speaker, facing some allegations in connection with the dollar smuggling case in which his assistant private secretary K Ayyappan was questioned by the Customs in Kochi Friday.

Customs sources said Ayyappan was summoned to cross examine evidence it had gathered on alleged involvement of some "powerful persons" in the case.

Despite the sloganeering, the

Governor began on time the customary address which detailed the achievements and performances of the lone Left front government in the country in its over four-and-half-year tenure.

A visibly irritated Khan asked the opposition members thrice to allow him fulfill his Constitutional duty, but his plea fell on deaf ears.

"I am doing my constitutional duty...It is expected that no obstruction will be created while the

Governor is performing constitutional duties. You have already raised enough slogans...Don't interrupt me," he said.

Referring to the protest by farmers against the new laws, he said "These agrarian laws will undermine regulated markets, result in eventual demise of minimum support price and tilt the balance of bargaining power definitely in favour of corporate middle men."

Being a consumer state, Kerala was also going to be "affected adversely" by the Essential Commodities Act amendment and resultant hoarding and profiteering, he said.

On central agencies, he said "Actions of certain central government agencies have overstepped the constitutional contours and are impeding the development activities and flagship programmes undertaken by the state. This has had a demoralising effect on honest and hard-working officers," the Governor claimed.

Khan also said in such a situation "co-operative federalism would lose its content and remain only in form".

'Merger of officers' cadre to further integration of J&K'

J&K will now be getting its officers from the common cadre available for Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram as well as all Union Territories of India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: Union Minister Jitendra Singh Friday said merger of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre of IAS and IPS officers into the AGMUT cadre would further the process of total integration of the Union Territory with the rest of the country.

The Jammu and Kashmir cadre of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officers was on Thursday merged with the AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories) cadre.

The officers of these three services are allotted cadre, which is either a state or state and union territories.

"After the creation of the Union



Territory following the abrogation of Article 370, the merger of J&K cadre into AGMUT cadre was a natural corollary and would further carry forward the process of total integration of J&K with the mainstream India," he told PTI.

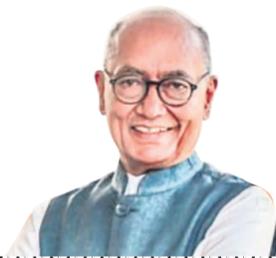
Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, said UT cadre offers Jammu & Kashmir wider range of officers to choose from because

there is going to be a much larger pool of all-India service officers, including IAS officers, for posting in the two newly created Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

He said J&K will now be getting its officers from the common cadre available for the three states of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram as well as all the Union Territories of India.

As a result of this, the officers from J&K can now be moved seamlessly in and out of J&K among the different Union Territories of India as well as the three states of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Mizoram, said Singh.

"Such an arrangement often tends to bring in more accountability in the conduct and performance of officers," he added.



Hindus and Muslims unitedly fought for our country's Independence. Those who did not even participate in the freedom struggle are out to vitiate the atmosphere of the country

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | CONGRESS RAJYA SABHA MP

COLD WAVE CONDITIONS PREVAIL IN NORTH INDIA

Cold wave conditions continued unabated in several parts of north India Friday with the minimum temperature in Delhi dropping to 9.6 degrees Celsius and a MeT official predicting severe winter for Rajasthan in the coming days



of the day quote

Farmers of Bengal will get their due after the Mamata Banerjee government goes and the BJP government comes to power

KAILASH VIJAYVARGIYA | BJP NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY

To protect Delhiites from exposure to the virus from the UK, the Delhi government has taken important decisions. Travellers coming from UK will have to mandatorily undergo a self-paid RT-PCR test on arrival at the airport

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

As of now, we have 1,000 trained vaccinators and four support team members per vaccinator. The state is equipped to administer four lakh doses of vaccine per day

BALBIR SINGH SIDHU | PUNJAB HEALTH MINISTER

Govt issues norms for airlines to carry Covid-19 vaccine



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 8: Aviation regulator DGCA Friday issued guidelines to all aircraft operators who plan to transport COVID-19 vaccines packed in dry ice to various parts of the country.

If vaccines packed in dry ice is being transported in the passenger cabin of an aircraft, then the flight crew should be properly trained on the hazards and risks of its transportation, it noted.

Dry ice transforms into carbon dioxide gas at temperatures higher than -78 degrees Celsius under normal atmospheric pressure and, therefore, it is classified as "dangerous goods" by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), it said. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said, "Adequate number of carbon dioxide detectors should be available in the cabin. Such detectors should be located at locations for timely and reliable detection of dangerous concentration of carbon dioxide."

PM TO INTERACT WITH CMs MONDAY

With the Covid-19 vaccination drive expected to commence next week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to chair a meeting with the Chief Ministers of all the states. The meeting is likely to be held at 4 p.m. Monday, said sources. In the meeting, the Prime Minister is expected to discuss the detailed plans to roll Covid vaccines in all the states, following the Drug Controller General India's (DCGI) approval for the restricted emergency use of two vaccines Serum Institute's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. The information comes on a day when Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan announced that the government is in the process of ensuring vaccination for all and the drive will start soon.

operations," it said. The country is preparing for the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines and the second nationwide mock drill on the drive was conducted Friday. India's drugs regulator has approved Oxford COVID-19 vaccine Covishield, being manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country. The Indian Medical Association Friday appealed to all its members to actively participate in the COVID-19 vaccination drive across the country. "As you all are aware of the COVID-19 vaccine being made available in the immediate future, it becomes our natural responsibility to assist the vaccination drive in a professional way," the doctors' body said.

Allahabad HC reunites interfaith couple again

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj (UP), Jan 8: The Allahabad High Court has come to the rescue of another inter-faith couple, facing harassment at the hands of their families.

A single bench of Justice Saral Srivastava said that no one can interfere with the lives of two adult individuals who have decided to live together.

The court directed that police protection be granted, if necessary, to a couple that had married across religions.

Justice Saral Srivastava reiterated that nobody is entitled to interfere with the peaceful lives of two adults who were living together.

In this case, a Hindu woman had converted to Islam prior to marrying a Muslim man. The petitioners claimed that they are adults and living together out of their own free will.

They told the court that the woman decided to follow the Muslim religion and converted herself vol-



Representative image

untarily. The couple approached the court and said that they were being threatened and harassed by family members.

In support of their age, the petitioners brought on record their High School mark sheet and Aadhar cards. After the certificates confirmed that the petitioners were adults, the court directed the police to provide protection to the young

couple, if necessary.

The Court also directed the husband to create a fixed deposit of Rs. 3 lakhs in favour of his wife by the next date of hearing February 2, 2021. This is not the first time in the recent months that the High Court has come to the aid of couples who had married across faiths.

The Court has repeatedly held that the two individuals having attained the age of majority, are living together, nobody is entitled to interfere in their peaceful life.

In December last year, the High Court had expressed that a woman who had attained the age of majority had the right to live her life on her own terms.

In November, the Court said that the right to live with a person of one's choice is intrinsic to the right to life and personal liberty irrespective of religion.

In both cases, the Court granted relief to couples who had approached the Court on account of facing opposition to the marriage across faiths.

KANGANA, SISTER RECORD STATEMENTS BEFORE POLICE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 8: Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut Friday appeared before Bandra police here along with her sister to record statements in a case of sedition and spreading communal hatred, and claimed in a video earlier in the day that she was being targeted for expressing her views.

Ranaut, who has been provided Y-plus category security of CRPF personnel, and her sister Rangoli Chandel arrived at the police station in suburban Mumbai around 1 pm with their lawyer amid heavy media presence.

They left after nearly two hours. A senior police official said they could be called again for questioning after the next hearing in the magistrate's court.

"As per the assurance given to the High Court, she and her sister appeared before the police and recorded their statements today," Ranaut's lawyer Rizwan Siddiqui told PTI.

A magistrate's court in Bandra had directed the police to carry out an inquiry against Ranaut and Chandel following a complaint for allegedly trying to create hatred and communal tension through their social media posts. Casting director and fitness trainer Munawwar Ali Sayyad had filed the complaint referring to tweets and other statements from Ranaut and her sister.

The police registered an FIR in October. They were booked under IPC sections, including 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race), 295-A (deliberate acts hurting religious sentiments) and 124-A (sedition).

Ahead of her visit to the police station, Ranaut put out a video on Twitter to say she was being targeted for expressing her opinion on issues related to the country's welfare. "My house was demolished illegally. When I talk about the welfare of the farmers there are cases being registered against me almost every day, for instance there is a case against me because I laughed," she claimed in the 1.30 minute video.

Spurious liquor kills 5; accused held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bulandshahr/Lucknow, Jan 8: Five people have died and 16 others hospitalised after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district, police said Friday.

The authorities have suspended four policemen and removed three senior Meerut zone excise officials from their post for laxity.

An excise inspector and three other members of the department have also been suspended.

Police have also arrested the main accused, identified as Kuldeep.

According to a government spokesperson in Lucknow, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to initiate stern action under the National Security Act and the Gangsters Act in the case.

Bulandshahr Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Santosh Kumar Singh said some people had fallen sick at Jeet Garhi village of the district Wednesday night after consuming liquor purchased from Kuldeep.

SHORT TAKES

Total 82 UK strain nCoV cases in India

New Delhi: The Central government Friday said that a total of 82 persons have been detected with the new 'more transmissible' UK coronavirus mutant strain. They have been kept in physical isolation in health facilities. Earlier on the day, a flight from the US landed in Delhi with 246 passengers on board amid concerns about the mutant strain that emerged in Britain. According to the Health Ministry, all 82 persons have been kept in a single room isolation in designated healthcare facilities by respective state governments. Their close contacts have also been put under quarantine.

Mamata kicks off KIFF

Kolkata: Amid the coronavirus scare, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday allowed full occupancy in all movie theatres while virtually inaugurating the 26th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) here. The virtual inaugural session was attended by Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, who also happens to be Bengal's brand ambassador. "I request West Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay to issue a notification allowing 100 per cent occupancy in all theatres from the present 50 per cent," Banerjee said in her inaugural speech.

IMD predicts good rainfall

New Delhi: Several parts of the country, mostly south India, are likely to receive a good amount of rainfall this month, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Friday. There is a possibility of cold wave conditions over Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana and north Rajasthan from January 11 and 12, and above normal rainfall in south India from January 14 to 28, the IMD said.

13-year-old sets record

Hyderabad: A 13-year-old boy has set a new record by playing 20 songs in 30 minutes on keyboard with a blindfold. A.S. Hariharan Naidu achieved the feat to enter the 'Wonder Book of Records.' A student of eighth standard at Gitanjali Devshala in Hyderabad, he recently set the record by staging the performance in the presence of judges from Wonder Book of Records (WBR).

SWORD SKILL



A Nihang or Sikh religious warrior displays his skills during the farmers' protest, at Singhu border, in New Delhi

Dolphin beaten to death

The gangetic dolphin was reportedly beaten to death by the locals who mistook it for a 'deadly fish'

AGENCIES

Pratapgarh (Uttar Pradesh), Jan 8: The death of a dolphin in the Sharda Sahayak canal in Pratapgarh district has turned into a major controversy.

The incident took place January 1. The local police and forest officials had reached the spot and had sent the body for post mortem.

The matter, however, was kept under wraps until the video clip went viral Friday when someone posted the clip of the dolphin being beaten to death by the locals. The forest officials evaded comments on the issue and said that it was yet to be verified if it was actually a dolphin. The local police said the forest officials would be better placed to respond to the queries. A local source, meanwhile,



said the water gate of the canal had been closed and the water level had receded.

"In the morning of the New Year, local people saw the dolphin moving in the water. Some said it was a 'deadly and poisonous fish' while others said it could kill people who went near it. A huge crowd collected at the spot and people decided that it would be dangerous to let it go. The crowds started beating the dolphin and some even hit with

an axe," the source said.

Circle officer, Jitendra Singh, meanwhile, denied the reports that the dolphin was beaten to death by the locals. During investigation, names of three persons belonging to Rae Bareilly district surfaced and they were arrested on Thursday, ASP (West) Dinesh Dwivedi said. Those who killed the dolphin were not able to take it away because of its weight, the ASP added.

Govt wants to tire out farmers: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: On a day the eighth round of talks between the Centre and farmer leaders ended inconclusively, the Congress Friday accused the government of trying to tire out the agitating farmers and stressed that repealing the three farm laws was the only solution to the issue.

The Congress also stepped up the offensive against the government by launching an online campaign in support of the farmers' agitation, with senior party leader Rahul Gandhi accusing the Centre of betraying the farmers for benefitting their "corporate friends".

The meeting between the government and representatives of protesting farmer unions Friday failed to break the over-a-month-long deadlock with both sides sticking

to their positions.

While farmer leaders told the government their "ghar wapsi" from protest sites at Delhi borders can happen only after "law wapsi", the Centre insisted talks must be limited to contentious clauses and ruled out a complete withdrawal of Acts.

Hitting out at the Centre, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "The Modi government has proved to be the most inhuman, arrogant and ruthless in the history of India. It can neither see the farmers dying due to the cold every day nor the economy coming to a standstill."

"It is trying to tire out the 'anadada' by playing the game of meetings with the farmers. But the farmer will neither tire out nor bow down and will not stop," he said in a tweet in Hindi. Congress

general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra met at senior party leader Rahul Gandhi's residence party's MPs and MLAs from Punjab who have been sitting in protest at Jantar Mantar demanding the repeal of the farm laws.

"The only solution is to repeal the three farm laws. There is no other solution," she told the protesting legislators during the meeting. "We have always stood by the farmers and we will not step back," she added while reiterating the party's support for farmers.

Punjab MPs Ravneet Singh Bittu, Jasbir Singh Gill and Gurjit Singh Aujla, along with some of the party MLAs including Kulbir Singh Zira have been sitting on a dharna at Jantar Mantar for the last 32 days in support of the farmers and demanding the repeal of the farm laws.

Over half of Army personnel under severe stress: Study

VARIOUS STRESS MANAGEMENT MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY THE INDIAN ARMY AND THE DEFENCE MINISTRY DURING THE LAST 15 YEARS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS, THE STUDY STATED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: The Indian Army has been losing more personnel every year in suicides, fratricides and untoward incidents than in any enemy action and over half of its soldiers seem to be under severe stress presently, said a study by think tank United Service Institution of India (USI).

"Prolonged exposure of Indian Army personnel to CI (counter-insurgency)/CT (counter-terrorism) environment has been one of the contributory factors for increased stress levels," said the research undertaken by Col A K Mor, Senior

Research Fellow at the USI during 2019-20. There has been a significant increase in stress levels amongst Indian Army personnel during approximately the last two decades due to operational and non-operational stressors, it said. "Furthermore, presently more than half of Indian Army personnel seem to be under severe stress," said the study that was uploaded on the USI's website last month.

"The Indian Army has been losing more personnel every year due to suicides, fratricides and untoward incidents than in response to any enemy and/or terrorist activities," it mentioned. Units and sub-



units under stress are likely to witness an increased number of incidents of indiscipline, unsatisfactory state of training, inadequate maintenance of equipment and low morale that adversely affects their combat preparedness and operational performance, it noted.

As per the study, the major organisational causes of stress amongst Army officers include inadequacies in the quality of leadership, overburdened commitments, inadequate resources, frequent dislocations, lack of fairness and transparency in postings and promotions, insufficient accommodation and non-grant of leave.

The main organisational stressors as perceived by junior commissioned officers (JCOs)/other ranks (ORs) include delay and denial of leave, excessive engagements, domestic problems, humiliation by seniors, lack of dignity, unreasonable restrictions on the use of mobiles, lack of recreational facilities and conflict with seniors as well as subordinates.

Maj General (Retd) B K Sharma is currently the director of the USI. The USI's website says that the three service chiefs - General M M Naravane, Admiral Karambir Singh and Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria - are its Vice Patrons.

Its president is Vice Adm R Hari Kumar, who is Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chief of Staffs Committee (CISC). The Indian armed forces have been losing over 100 soldiers every year due to suicides and fratricides leading to the "grim reality" of one soldier dying every third day, the study noted.

"This loss is substantially greater than the operational casualties suffered by the Armed forces. In addition, a number of soldiers and leaders have been affected by hypertension, heart diseases, psychosis, neurosis and other related ailments," it mentioned.

of the day quote

India is the only country which is honouring its commitment on climate change, even though it is not responsible for it

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

The difference between the two parties is that the BJP comes (WB) for votes during elections, while the Trinamool Congress stays put with people

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC MP

It is for the first time in the country that a government which indulges in such lies has come to power. BJP is not saying anything other than lies

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Illegal arms supplier held

New Delhi: The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has arrested a 24-year-old illegal arms supplier, officials said Friday. The accused has been identified as Ashish Kumar Pandey, a resident of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, they said. A total of 35 semi-automatic pistols, 60 live bullets and a mobile phone were recovered from his possession.

Minor who crossed LoC repatriated

Jammu: A minor, who had inadvertently crossed the Line of Control (LoC) from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) to Poonch district in Jammu and Kashmir, has been repatriated, the army said Friday. Ali Haidar, 14, had crossed the LoC into the Indian side December 31 and was apprehended by a police party near the Batar nallah in Poonch. He has been handed over to the Pakistani army.

NCB searches for SSR's friend

Mumbai: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Friday carried out searches to look for late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's friend who had skipped the agency's summons for questioning a day earlier in a drugs-related case, officials said. "We are looking for Sushant's friend and Assistant Director Rishikesh Pawar who has been absconding since yesterday," a senior NCB official connected to probe told IANS.

Woman raped at gunpoint

Moradabad: A 19-year-old school student was allegedly raped by her neighbour in her house at gunpoint and thrown off the terrace as she tried to raise an alarm over the incident, police said Friday. The girl suffered severe injuries from the fall and is undergoing treatment at Deendayal Upadhyay Government Hospital in Moradabad, Dilari Police station SHO Satraj Singh said.

Teen murdered

Malda (WB): A 14-year-old boy has been allegedly abducted and murdered in West Bengal's Malda district, police said Friday. The incident took place in Paranpur in Pukhuria police station area, an officer said. As per the FIR lodged by the deceased's parents, they received a letter near their house on Thursday evening, saying their son has been kidnapped, he said.



Children below five years of age should be administered oral polio vaccine January 17 and parents should ensure it

HARSH VARDHAN | UNION MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

MIB LAUNCHES DIGITAL CALENDER, DIARY FOR 2021

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Friday launched a digital calendar and diary for 2021, instead of printing them, which helped the ministry save nearly ₹5 crore



A worker cleans a poultry farm in view of Avian Influenza outbreak, in Surat PTI PHOTO

AROUND 50 BIRDS, MOSTLY CROWS, HAVE DIED IN DELHI OVER THE LAST THREE TO FOUR DAYS, OFFICIALS SAID

Bird flu confirmed in six states: Govt

FRESH THREATS

At a time when the Andhra Pradesh authorities have been battling the Covid-19 pandemic, the fresh scare of bird flu that has spread its tentacles across various states in the country has pulled down the consumption, price and sale of chickens in the state

Over 1.60L

birds of five poultry farms in Haryana's Panchkula district are set to be culled as some poultry samples there have tested positive for the avian flu, Agriculture minister J P Dalai said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: The Centre Friday said bird flu has been confirmed so far in Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat, and asked these six states to contain the disease as per the action plan. Unusual mortality of 16 birds

has also been reported at DDA park Hastals Village in the national capital, and samples have been sent to a testing lab.

"So far, the disease has been confirmed from six states (Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat). "It is learnt that culling operations have been completed in both the affected districts of Kerala. The disinfection process is underway," according to an official statement.

States that are still unaffected by Avian Influenza (AI) have been requested to keep a vigil on any unusual mortality among birds and to report immediately so that necessary measures are taken in the fastest possible time, it added.

Central teams have been deployed to visit the affected states of Kerala, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh for monitoring and for epidemiological investigation.

The government said that in Haryana, there has been confirmation of Avian Influenza positive samples from ICAR-NIHSAD in poultry (two poultry farms) of the Panchkula district. Positive samples have also been reported in migratory birds in the Junagadh district, Gujarat, and in crows in Sawai Madhopur, Pali, Jaisalmer and Mohar districts of Rajasthan.

Therefore, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has suggested the affected states to contain the disease as per the Action Plan on Avian Influenza.

"Unusual mortality of 16 birds has also been reported in DDA park Hastals Village, Delhi. The AH (animal husbandry) Department of NCT of Delhi has reportedly taken precautionary measures and sent samples to ICAR-NIHSAD and a test report is awaited," the statement said.

The government said awareness among poultry farmers and the general public (consumers of eggs and chicken) about the disease is of foremost importance.

"Communication from the secretary, department of animal husbandry and dairying, has also been sent to the health ministry to restore consumer confidence in consumption of chicken and eggs," the statement said. It added that appropriate advisories have been requested to be issued from the health ministry in this regard, so that consumer confidence affected by rumours is put to rest.

"Also, states have been requested to increase awareness regarding safety of poultry or poultry products that were safe for consumption following boiling/ cooking procedures for which central support would be available," the statement said.

Give bulletproof jackets, arms to forest staff: SC



Representative image INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

est officers and staff who are poorly armed against poachers, who are likely to be heavily armed," the bench observed. "A forest ranger is in a situation where he cannot call for help, unlike a policeman in a city. No one to help him in a forest," the CJJ remarked. "We find it difficult to comprehend how these forest officers and staff would be in a position to protect the environment and forests that are normally vast tracts of uninhabited land, of which poachers take undue advantage to carry out their nefarious activities," the top court said in its order.

The apex court's observations came during the hearing of an application for stay on all proceedings against forest officers and staff concerned vis-a-vis an FIR registered under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act on May 23, 2020, at the Mount Abu police station in Rajasthan.

The top court stayed the proceedings as an interim relief and scheduled the matter for hearing after four weeks. Earlier, during the hearing, the Chief Justice recalled that pangolin scales were seized by forest officials in the past, adding that these were in great demand in China.

New Delhi, Jan 8: Expressing serious concern over brutal attack by poachers on unarmed forest officials, the Supreme Court on Friday asked the state governments to follow the Assam model and provide firearms and bulletproof jackets to forest guards.

Pointing out that the situation was "serious", a bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde and comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, cited the example of a particular state and said that it was "extremely distressing" to see forest officials wearing slippers and armed with sticks put on duty to protect large tracts of forest land and flora and fauna. "It is difficult to imagine how any law can be enforced by the for-



FLYING TOGETHER

A flock of pigeons flies over Jal Mahal on a cold winter day, in Jaipur PTI PHOTO

Ex-serviceman held on charge of spying for Pak

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow/Meerut, Jan 8: A retired Armyman was arrested Friday in Uttar Pradesh on the charge of working for a Pakistani spy agency since 2016, official sources said.

The sources told IANS that retired Signalman Saurabh Sharma was apprehended by the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) following inputs from the Military Intelligence (MI) Unit in Lucknow.

The ex-serviceman was allegedly working for Pakistani intelligence handlers based in Karachi.



After his arrest from his parental house in Bihuni village in Hapur district, Sharma told his interrogators that he got in touch with a Pakistani intelligence operative on Facebook in 2014. The operative, he said, initially introduced 'herself' as a defence journalist. Subsequently, by 2016, he had started sharing sensitive military information in return for money, the sources said. Sharma, the sources said, shared all the sensitive information through text, audio and photo messages and also calls, mostly on WhatsApp.

UK-India flights resume, chaos at Delhi airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: Chaotic scenes were witnessed at the Delhi airport Friday as many passengers arriving from the UK vociferously complained against the national capital government's belated decision to make seven-day institutional quarantine compulsory for them irrespective of their COVID-19 test results.

Passenger flights resumed from the UK to India in limited numbers from Friday onwards after remaining suspended for 16 days due to the emergence of a new coronavirus variant in that country.

It was the only UK flight to land in Delhi Friday and it had 256 passengers in it, said Gauri Agarwal, founder of the Genestrings Diagnostic Centre, which is handling coronavirus testing of all passengers at the Delhi airport. "This is ridiculous. You cannot tell people the rules have changed after they land. Some notice must be given! Chaos at Delhi Airport with this flight, families with small children, pregnant woman howling," Vistara's former Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer Sanjiv Kapoor said on Twitter.

'Kidnapping for marriage' thriving in Bihar even in 2021

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Jan 8: Marriages are said to be made in heaven but in some pockets of Bihar tying the knot in the shadow of the gun is not unusual. 'Abduction for marriage' in districts such as Jamui, Lakhisarai, Begusarai, Jahanabad, Patna, Nawada and Vaishali takes place frequently despite it having serious consequences later on.

One such incident was reported Thursday when five unidentified men abducted Subham Kumar, a 20-year-old youth from Gangasari village under Barharia police station in Lakhisarai district while he was taking a morning walk with two friends. The kidnappers forced him to marry a girl in Jamui district. Subham was recently selected

for a clerical job in the Army and the bride's family knew about it. They then hired a gang to execute the kidnapping.

Another similar incident took place March 24, 2020, when a pharmacy student Amit Kumar was kidnapped from Jandaha in Vaishali district and was taken to Samastipur for marriage with a minor girl. Kumar was in tears at being forced into marriage while the girl was also weeping as her father was getting her married against her wishes.

In June 2019, three youths belonging to Paharpur in Gaya district went to Nawada's famous Kakolat waterfall, where they were allegedly kidnapped by six men at gunpoint. They forced one of the youth Nityanand Kumar Rai to tie the knot with



Representative image

a minor girl, who was a Class 10 student.

All three youth were beaten by the bride's family before forcing Rai to marry. They released his friends with a stern warning and held Rai captive in their house.

Later, the minor girl claimed before the Duty Magistrate that she knew Rai since he visited her village to attend a marriage function. Kidnapping for marriage has a long history in Bihar. As per data available with IANS, 2,695 cases were reported in 2020 and only seven cases turned out to be fake. The highest number of such cases took place in September 2020 when Bihar police registered 349 cases in all 43 police districts. There were 336 cases in March 2020, 325 cases in October, 305 in June, 304 in February, 301 in July, 286 in August, 270 in

January, 138 in May and 81 in April 2020. The Bihar police did not register any cases in November and December 2020.

A senior Bihar police official said the 'kidnapping for marriage' number in 2020 is lower compared to 2019 and 2018 probably due to the lockdown and pandemic.

In 2019, Bihar police registered 4,498 kidnapping for marriage cases and only 10 of them were false. A maximum of 480 cases were reported in May 2019, 454 in March and 443 in June.

There were 4,317 cases under similar charges registered in 2018 where May saw the highest number of cases with 480, followed by 465 in June and 428 in July.

These kidnappings generally take place during the marriage seasons.

international



The attack on Capitol Hill by Donald Trump's supporters is one of the darkest days in the US history. It was the result of the President's contempt for democracy

US JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FINES BOEING \$2.5BN

The US Justice Department announced on Thursday that Boeing has agreed to pay more than \$2.5 billion to resolve a criminal charge related to a conspiracy to defraud regulators over the 737 MAX crashes



of the day quote

In a banana republic, mob violence determines the exercise of power. In the United States, law enforcement officials quash mob violence so that the people's representatives can exercise power



MIKE POMPEO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

On December 20, we closed (our) border with the United Kingdom. This measure will be extended until further notice



JEAN CASTEX | FRENCH PRIME MINISTER

Our reforms have brought about profound changes in the ideological and theoretical field, organizational structure as well as the state and governance systems, with extensive public participation



XI JINPING | CHINESE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Cop 5th to die in Capitol riot

Washington: A US Capitol Police officer has died of injuries sustained during clashes with a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters who overran a session of Congress, police said late Thursday. It was the first law enforcement death stemming from the violence at the Capitol Wednesday. Four protesters died, including a woman who was shot by police. Three other deaths were reported on the Capitol grounds, but the circumstances remained unclear

US Capitol police chief resigns

Washington: The US Capitol police chief handed in his resignation Thursday, a day after Congress was invaded by a mob egged on by President Donald Trump, a source close to the agency said. Steven Sund "is resigning effective January 16, 2021," the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told AFP, hours after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called for his resignation, following sharp rebukes for what many criticised as a lack of preparation.

2020 was Europe's warmest year

Berlin: 2020 was the warmest year in Europe since records began, according to data published Friday by the EU climate monitoring service. Last year topped the previous temperature record in Europe — 2019 — by a whopping 0.4° Celsius (0.72° Fahrenheit), the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service said. It said 2020 was also tied with 2016 for the warmest year worldwide, confirming the past decade as the hottest on record. Data showed 2020 was 1.25 °C (2.2 °F) warmer than during the pre-industrial period from 1850-1900.

US modifies H-1B visa process

Washington: The outgoing Trump administration Friday modified the selection process for H-1B visa, giving priority to salary and skills instead of the current lottery procedures. The notification was published in the Federal Register. It would come into force in 60 days. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees.

US lawmakers call for Trump's impeachment

Lawmakers have called for ousting President Trump from office, while House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that if he wasn't removed, the House may move forward with a second impeachment

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 8: Lawmakers of both parties have raised the prospect of ousting President Donald Trump from office, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that if he wasn't removed, the House may move forward with a second impeachment.

Though Trump has less than two weeks in office, lawmakers and even some in his administration began discussing the issue Wednesday afternoon as Trump first refused to forcefully condemn the violent assault on the US Capitol by a mob of his supporters, and then appeared to excuse it.

Senior Trump administration officials raised the possibility of invoking Section 4 of the 25th Amendment — the forceful removal of Trump from power by his own Cabinet. Pelosi Thursday told a news conference she is waiting for a decision from Vice President Mike Pence and other Cabinet officials. She challenged several of them by name, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin.

"Do they stand by these actions?" Pelosi asked. "Are they ready to say that for the next 13 days this dangerous man can do further harm to our country?"

Most Democrats, and many Republicans, put the blame squarely on Trump after hundreds of protesters bearing Trump flags and clothing broke into the Capitol Wednesday and caused destruction and mass evacuations. The



Supporters of President Trump invaded the Capitol Hill, Wednesday

President had urged the supporters to protest as Congress was counting the electoral votes that confirmed Biden's win. Pelosi said "a threshold was crossed of such magnitude" that Trump should not be allowed making any decisions.

There did not appear to be public support for the move, for now, among members of Trump's Cabinet, especially after Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao resigned in protest Thursday following the Capitol attack. But officials across the government went so far as to study up on the procedures for declaring Trump "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."

According to two people involved in the administration talks, staff-level discussions on the matter took place across multiple departments and even parts of the White House. No member of the Cabinet has publicly expressed support for

the move — which would make Pence the acting president — though several were believed to be sympathetic to the notion, believing Trump is too volatile in his waning days before President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration January 20.

\$50K reward for information on rioters

Washington: The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$50,000 for information on the individuals responsible for placing pipe bombs in the committee headquarters of the key US political parties in the capital, the agency said. Many law enforcement agencies received reports on Wednesday of two suspected devices, one each at the headquarters of the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee, the FBI said in a statement on Twitter. Thursday's statement was accompanied by an image of a masked suspect wearing gloves and a hoodie, carrying an object. "The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$50,000 for information leading to the location, arrest and conviction," the agency's Washington field office added.

Under the 25th Amendment, Trump could dispute his Cabinet's finding, but the Cabinet could

quickly reaffirm its position, keeping Pence in power while the question fell to lawmakers.

BEIJING-ISLAMABAD NEXUS PAK MINORITIES FACE THE HEAT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 8: Soon after the brutal murder of 11 coal miners of the Pakistan's Hazara minority community, which drew international condemnation, human rights of Pashtuns have also come under the scanner. The Pashtuns have been rocked with a series of arbitrary detentions by state authorities at the behest of Pakistan's intelligence agencies at the forefront of targeting country's religious minorities.

After the shock police custody of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) leader Ali Wazir, a sitting member of the Pakistan parliament, on charges of hate speech, another senior leader of PTM and a senior Pashtun politician, Said Alam Mehsood was arbitrarily arrested from his home January 3. As if that were not enough, the Pashtuns were in for more shock and disbelief after Sanna Ejaz, a human rights worker and a PTM member, was arrested along with 45 other PTM activists in Peshawar Wednesday.

The series of arbitrary detentions and persecution of Pashtuns who have been peacefully protesting economic exploitation, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary detentions of Pashtuns in the Pakhtunkhwa and tribal areas of Pakistan has been condemned the world over.

"Authorities must immediately and unconditionally release protestors belonging to the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement who have been arbitrar-

ily detained in Peshawar," said Amnesty International South Asia. While the Pashtun movement for self-determination has a long history, a new wave of brutal repression has begun, after the Pakistan and China bonded to develop the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The risk-averse Chinese have been prodding the Pakistanis to ensure the security of their project, which mostly passes through three major sensitive zones — Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan claimed by India, and China's restive Xinjiang Autonomous Region.

Xinjiang, where a separatist movement is raging, is at the heart of the China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), of which CPEC is the flagship. China's BRI has therefore become a critical factor in the gross human rights violations of Pakistan's ethnic minorities. Unsurprisingly, the Imran Khan government is facing the heat after global condemnation over the killing of Hazaras from the minority Shias.

DAKAR RALLY 2021



Toyota Gazoo Racing's Henk Lategan and co-driver Brett Cummings react after crashing during stage 5 of the Dakar Rally, Thursday

Iran bans imports of US, UK Covid-19 vax

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Dubai, Jan 8: Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei banned Iran's government Friday from importing Covid-19 vaccines from the United States and Britain.

"Imports of US and British vaccines into the country are forbidden. I have told this to officials and I'm saying it publicly now," Khamenei said in a live televised speech.

"I have no confidence in them. Sometimes they want to test vaccines on other nations ... If the Americans were able to produce a vaccine they would not have



such a coronavirus fiasco in their own country."

Iran, the country that has been worst hit by the novel coronavirus in the Middle East, launched human trials of its first domestic

Covid-19 vaccine candidate late last month, saying it could help Iran defeat the pandemic despite US sanctions that affect its ability to import vaccines.

However, Khamenei praised Iran's efforts to develop domestic vaccines but said Iran could obtain vaccines "from other reliable places". He gave no details but China and Russia are both allies of Iran.

"I'm not optimistic about France either because of their history of infected blood," Khamenei said, referring to the country's contaminated blood scandal of the 1980s and 1990s.

ABU MAHDI AL-MUHANDIS' DEATH

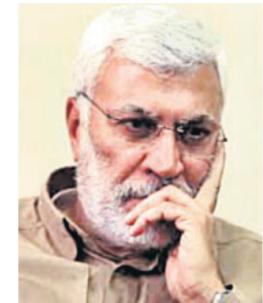
Iraq issues warrant against Trump

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Baghdad, Jan 8: An Iraqi court has issued an arrest warrant for outgoing US President Donald Trump over the killing of deputy chief of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, commander of the paramilitary Hashd Shaabi forces, in January 2020.

On January 3, 2020, a US drone strike struck a convoy near Baghdad International Airport that killed al-Muhandis, as well as Qasem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps.

"A judge in Baghdad's al-Rusafa court in charge of investigating the killing of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy chief of Iraq's paramilitary Hashd Shaabi forces, issued an arrest warrant (Thursday) against the US President Donald Trump," Xinhua news agency



quoted the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council as saying in a statement. The judge issued the warrant after hearing the complaints of al-Muhandis' family members and the completion of the preliminary investigation procedures, the statement said.

"Investigation procedures are continuing to find out the other participants in committing this crime, whether they are Iraqis or foreigners," it added.

The Hashd Shaabi or the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) is a Shia paramilitary force made up of former militias with close ties to Iran.

It was recognised under a 2016 Iraqi law as an independent military force that answers directly to the Prime Minister.

Iranian state media had reported on Monday that Tehran has also issued an arrest warrant for Trump over Soleimani's death.

Tehran attorney general Ali Alqasi Mehr claimed that Trump would be prosecuted after his term ends.

Wuhan Covid infections thrice higher than official figure

A study found that 1.68% of those from Wuhan contained antibodies for SARS-CoV-2 compared to 0.59% in the surrounding Hubei province

REUTERS

Shanghai, China: The number of people who have been infected with Covid-19 in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the virus was first identified, could be around three times the official figure, according to a study by Chinese researchers based in the city.

The paper published by the PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases journal Thursday, analysed blood samples from more than 60,000 healthy individuals taken from locations across China from March to May 2020.

It found that 1.68% of those from Wuhan contained antibodies for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes



Covid-19, compared to 0.59% in the surrounding Hubei province and 0.38% in the rest of China.

With the city's total population at more than 10 million, the researchers

estimated that as many as 168,000 Wuhan residents were infected with the virus, compared to the official number of 50,340 hospitalised cases. The study suggested at least two-

thirds of the total number were asymptomatic, and thousands could have been infected after the "elimination" of clinical cases, raising the possibility the virus could exist in a community for a long period without causing hospitalisations.

A separate study published by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) late last month put the "seroprevalence" rate in Wuhan, the percentage of the population with antibodies, even higher at 4.43%, implying that around half a million people in the city could have been infected.

Covid-19 was identified in Wuhan at the end of 2019, with the first outbreak associated with a seafood market in the city. China finally

locked down Wuhan and other cities in Hubei province January 23, 2020, but critics say it should have acted sooner. China has dismissed criticism of its early handling of the virus, and officials now point to overseas studies suggesting it was circulating in Europe several months before the Wuhan outbreak.

A 10-strong team from the World Health Organization was due to arrive in China this week to investigate the origins of Covid-19, but they have yet to be given authorisation to enter the country.

Total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases to date in mainland China now stands at 87,331, while the death toll remained unchanged at 4,634.

business



Today India is the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world and is home to 21 unicorns valued at \$73.2 billion. By some estimates, more than 50 'unicorn' startups might join the unicorn club as early as 2022

TARANJIT SINGH SANDHU | INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US

TESLA'S MARKET VALUE CROSSES \$800BN

Shares of Tesla jumped 4.9% Friday, taking its m-cap to more than \$800bn for the first time ever. In the previous session, its market value crossed \$774bn, making Tesla Wall Street's 5th most valuable firm, just behind Alphabet and ahead of Facebook



of the day quote

Urban Indians per se have shown a lot of resilience to brace and fight the pandemic. Now with the vaccine available, there is a glimmer of hope surging for 2021, to turn the tide and ring in better days for the economy and the citizens

AMIT ADARKAR | CEO, IPSOS INDIA

During this financial year, SAIL has continuously enhanced its production volumes. The first quarter was impacted due to the onset of the pandemic but gradually we have scaled up our performance by enhancing the volumes

SOMA MONDAL | CHAIRMAN, SAIL

The current buoyancy in prices is a result of the improvement in global macroeconomic sentiments with the beginning of vaccination drive against Covid-19. The favourable momentum is likely to continue in the next 12-15 months, resulting in a steady turnaround in the risk profile of the industry

JAYANTA ROY | SENIOR VP AND GROUP HEAD CORPORATE SECTOR RATINGS, ICRA

SHORT TAKES

Puri joins Strides Group

New Delhi: Former HDFC Bank managing director Aditya Puri has joined global pharma major Strides Group as an advisor and will also serve as a director of its associate company Stelis Biopharma. "Eminent corporate doyen Aditya Puri joins the Strides Group as an advisor and also will be a director of its associate company, Stelis Biopharma," Strides Pharma Science Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

TCS reports strongest growth

Mumbai: The country's largest software services firm TCS Friday reported a 7.2% rise in consolidated net profit to ₹8,701 crore for the December 2020 quarter. This is against a net profit of ₹8,118 crore in the year-ago period, TCS said. Revenue of the city-based firm grew 5.4% in the quarter under review to ₹42,015 crore from ₹39,854 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, it added. This is the strongest December quarter growth in nine years, TCS said.

Mercedes to hike car prices by 5%

Mumbai: Premium car maker Mercedes-Benz India Friday said it is hiking its car prices by 5% from January 15, owing to the currency depreciation and increasing input costs that have pushed up the overall production cost. With this, the low-end model like C-Class will be costlier by ₹2 lakh, while top-end models such as AMG GT 63S Door Coupe will cost a customer by ₹15 lakh more, the company said in a statement.

Tech M's m-cap crosses ₹1L cr-mark

New Delhi: Tech Mahindra's market capitalisation went past the ₹1-lakh crore mark helped by a rally in its stock price Friday. At the close of trade, the company's market valuation was at ₹1,01,671.34 crore on the BSE. Shares of the company gained 5.64 per cent to close at ₹1,050.95 on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 6.54 per cent to ₹1,059.95, its record high. With this, the company has become the fifth IT firm to enter the ₹1-lakh crore market capitalisation club.

'Global used smartphone market to reach \$65bn in 2024'

In contrast to the recent declines in the new smartphone market, as well as the forecast for minimal growth in new shipments over the next few years, the used market for smartphones shows no signs of slowing down across all parts of the globe

ANTHONY SCARSELLA | RESEARCH MANAGER, IDC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 8: The global shipments of used smartphones, both officially refurbished and used, are expected to reach 351.6 million units registering \$65 billion in market value in 2024, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.2 per cent from 2019 to 2024, an IDC report said Friday.

For 2020, the used smartphones shipments were likely to reach 225.4 million units.

This represents an increase of 9.2 per cent over the 206.5 million units shipped in 2019.

"In contrast to the recent declines in the new smartphone market, as well as the forecast for minimal growth in new shipments over the next few years, the used market for smartphones shows no signs of slowing down across all parts of the globe," said



Anthony Scarsella, research manager with IDC's Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker.

"Refurbished and used devices continue to provide cost-effective alternatives to both consumers and businesses that are looking to save money when purchasing a smartphone," Scarsella added.

Over the past year, there has been rapid growth in trade-in programmes and average selling prices (ASPs) across numerous channels.

"Vendors such as Apple, Samsung, and Huawei have all implemented their own programmes with very aggressive trade-in offers compared with other channels," the report noted.

Although 2020 volume was not as large as expected, the used market still performed well compared with the new market, where IDC is expecting a 6.4 per cent decline for smartphones for the year.

As with our previous forecast, we still expect to see double-digit growth during the forecast period, at an average of 11.8 per cent, the IDC said.

Telcos are also using trade-in combined with bundling (family plans and services) to get consumers to turn over their old device and upgrade.

SBI holds loan mela for SHGs



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: State Bank of India (SBI) organised SHG Loan Mela at Nalapanga (Janghira), Kendujhar for credit linkage of local Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Keonjhar collector Ashish Thakare graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The banks handed over credit linkage sanction letters to 50 SHGs and the credit limit amounts was ₹91.80 lakh.

Thakare expressed his pleasure at the bank's initiative and expected it to carry forward the activity more vigorously. SBI CGM, Bhubaneswar Circle, Ruma Dey expressed the bank's commitment to push for more credit uptake in rural areas and to actively participate in all such activities. Some SHGs had displayed their hand made products.

Similarly, SBI Padmapur branch also sanctioned credit letter to dairy farmers. About 29 KCC dairy loans, amounting to ₹7.17 lakh, was sanctioned on that day.

Many officials from the government and SBI have also participated. Among them were Subrat Jena, BDO, Harichandanpur; Sapan Goswami, DPM (OLM); Ravi Narayan Mahalik, LDM (BOD); Pradeep Kumar Sahu, CM (SBI); Adhiranjan Mohapatra, CM (SBI) and Pranabi Nayak, BM SBI, Janghira branch.

In addition, wheel chairs were also donated to five 'Dibyangs' under the bank's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity.

'Find permanent solution for PSH for food security'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: India Friday urged the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to work on finding a permanent solution to the issue of public stock holding for food security purposes.

Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan said the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has again brought to the fore the importance of food and livelihood security. He "urged the Membership for a permanent solution to Public Stock Holding (PSH) for food security", the Commerce Ministry said in a statement. The comments were made during the final session of India's seventh Trade Policy Review (TPR) which concluded on Friday at the WTO in Geneva.

Wadhawan also informed that India has a stable policy environment with considerably lower applied rates than its WTO commitments. "While emphasising that India's trade remedial investigations are conducted in a transparent manner and in accordance with WTO provisions, he also mentioned that only a minuscule fraction of

INDIA URGES WTO



Commerce Secy Anup Wadhawan said the ongoing pandemic has again brought to the fore the importance of food and livelihood security

He also informed that India has a stable policy environment with considerably lower applied rates than its WTO commitments

India's imports attract these measures," the statement said.

The TPR is an important mechanism under the WTO's monitoring function in which member countries' trade and related policies are examined with an aim to contribute towards improved adherence to WTO rules, while providing con-

structive feedback to the member under review. More than 1,050 questions were asked and 53 interventions were made by WTO member countries in the TPR meetings. Under the global trade norms, a WTO member country's food subsidy bill should not breach the limit of 10 per cent of the value of production based on the reference price of 1986-88.

Apprehending that the full implementation of food security programme may result in breach of WTO cap, India has been seeking amendments in the formula to calculate food subsidy cap.

As an interim measure, WTO members at the Bali ministerial meeting in December 2013 had agreed to put in place a mechanism, popularly called the Peace Clause, and committed to negotiate an agreement for permanent solution.

Wadhawan also highlighted that reform is a continuous and ongoing process, and "the Government of India is deeply committed to pursuing this path to make India an attractive trade and investment partner for the world".

MECL, OMECL sign pact for minerals exploration

OMECL has been established by the Odisha government to strengthen institutional set up for mineral exploration in the state, and to upscale the mineral exploration activities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 8: Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL), a Miniratna-I CPSE under the Ministry of Mines, Government of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Odisha Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (OMECL) for augmenting the exploration of Odisha's rich mineral resources.

The MoU was signed by MECL CMD Ranjit Rath and Managing Director OMECL Vineel Krishna in the presence of Union minister of Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi and State steel and mines minister Prafulla Mallick.

Odisha is the leading producer of chromite, graphite, bauxite, manganese ore, iron ore, sillimanite, quartzite, pyroxenite and dolomite. The state hosts the country's sole resources of ruby and platinum group of metals. It accounts for the country's 95% chromite, 92% nickel ore, 69% cobalt ore, 55% bauxite, 51% titaniferous magnetite, 40% limestone, 36% pyro-



phyllite, 33% iron ore (hematite), 26% sillimanite, 25% each fireclay & garnet, 24% each coal & zircon and 20% vanadium ore resources.

MECL is mandated to undertake detailed exploration of mineral acreages and currently operates pan-India with a portfolio of all the major and precious minerals offering integrated mineral exploration services.

The government of Odisha has established OMECL to strengthen institutional set up for mineral exploration in the state, and to upscale the mineral exploration activities so that the potential of mining sector is achieved through scientific exploration of mineral resources.

MECL CMD Rath said that by joining hand with OMECL the exploration activities of the state will get augmented.

BIZ BUZZ

Vax drive: AIBEA demands bankers' inclusion

New Delhi: The All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) Friday demanded inclusion of bankers in the priority category for the Covid-19 vaccination drive. As Covid-19 Warriors, bank employees have extended their continuous services to the people during the pandemic, AIBEA said in a letter written to PM Narendra Modi. Notwithstanding the lockdown, branches across the country remained open, including rural areas, despite no means of public transport to serve the people, AIBEA General Secretary CH Venkatchalam said. The letter said, "We are happy that these commendable services were duly taken note of by the government when their services came in for high appreciation by your good selves as well as by our respected Finance Minister."



IDFC Mutual Fund campaign for investors

Bhubaneswar: IDFC Mutual Fund announced the launch of its latest pan-India investor awareness campaign #PaisonKoRokoMat nudging savers to become investors. Vishal Kapoor, CEO - IDFC Asset Management Company Limited (AMC), added, "Our latest campaign #PaisonKoRokoMat deploys unique characterisation and an innovative storybook to urge savers to overcome their inertia, and explore the smart and modern mutual fund vehicle for their investments." Established in 2000, IDFC AMC is one of India's Top 10 asset managers with over ₹1,20,000 cr in AUM at the end of November 2020, across 55 Mutual Fund schemes. It has an experienced investment team with deep on-the-ground presence in over 46 cities and investors across 250 places across India. IDFC AMC is focused on helping savers become investors and create wealth. To support this objective, the AMC offers a range of prudently constructed investment products - across equities, fixed income and liquid alternatives.



Samsung India launches Galaxy M02s

Bhubaneswar: Smartphone giant Samsung launched the 'Max Up' Galaxy M02s under its widely popular Galaxy M Series. After the success of Galaxy M01 and Galaxy M01s in 2020, Samsung is looking to further cement its position in the sub-10K segment in India with some of the biggest upgrades in its product offering this year. The 'Max Up' Galaxy M02s is priced below ₹10,000 and is packed with a range of Samsung's first ever features for the digital-first consumers in this price segment. The Galaxy M02s is priced at ₹8,999 for 3GB+32GB variant and ₹9,999 for 4GB+64GB variant. Galaxy M02s will be available in three colours - black, blue and red flaunting a hazy and matt textured body.



Covid treatment may qualify for tax deduction benefits

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 8: Continuing with its pandemic relief initiatives, the government may extend income tax deduction benefits for Covid-19 treatment to individuals not covered under any health insurance.

Sources said that several pre-budget proposals for providing tax relief for Covid-19 treatment have come to the Revenue Department and these are being actively examined. If the proposal is accepted, it may form part of budget proposals for 2021-22, they added.

Currently, few deductions have been prescribed under Chapter VI-A of the Income Tax Act, 1961 for

medical treatment for self or dependent suffering from disability/severe disability (Sections 80DD, 80U), and medical treatment of prescribed diseases and ailments (Section 80DDB). However, there is no specific deduction under the Act which covers treatment cost for Covid-19 patients who are not covered under any health insurance.

The proposal that is now being considered is to include expenses made on Covid-19 treatment under the prescribed diseases category as per Section 80DDB and therefore, qualify such expenditure for getting income tax deduction benefits.

Interestingly, donation made to PM CARES fund designed specifi-



cally for providing Covid-19 relief is currently eligible for 100 per cent deduction under Section 80G of the Act, but no corresponding deduction has been notified for expenses in-

cluded on treatment of the disease itself.

"Given the substantial cost involved in Covid-19 treatment in Government or private hospitals, a

separate deduction capped up to ₹1,00,000 or actual treatment cost incurred by the taxpayer for self or family, whichever is lower, may be considered to be introduced under

the Act to provide much-needed relief to the taxpayers specially when such costs are not covered under a health insurance policy," said Parizad Sirwalla, partner and head, global mobility services-tax, KPMG Assurance and Consulting LLP India.

The inclusion of Covid-19 treatment for tax deduction would bring big benefits to individuals and their families who are not covered under any health insurance plan but still face this unwanted additional financial burden from the pandemic. Even with health insurance, several policies have not included cover for Covid-19 treatment. Such individuals would also benefit from I-T deduction if it is made available.

MATCH EVENLY POISED

Jadeja, Gill do star turns as India dominate day 2 despite Smith century guiding Australia to 338 in their first innings at SCG



GAME CHANGER: Ravindra Jadeja reacts after getting a wicket, Friday

SCORECARD

AUSTRALIA 1ST INNINGS
(overnight 166/2)

Marnus Labuschagne c Rahane b Jadeja 91, Steve Smith run out 131, Matthew Wade c Bumrah b Jadeja 13, Cameron Green lbw b Bumrah 0, Tim Paine b Bumrah 1, Pat Cummins b Jadeja 0, Mitchell Starc c Gill b Saini 24, Nathan Lyon lbw b Jadeja 0, Josh Hazlewood not out 1;
Extras: 10 (b-4, nb-5, w-1);
Total: 338 all out (105.4 overs).

Fall: 1/6 (Warner), 2/106 (Pucovski), 3/206 (Labuschagne), 4/232 (Wade), 5/249 (Green), 6/255 (Paine), 7/278 (Cummins), 8/310 (Starc), 9/315 (Lyon), 10/338 (Smith).

Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 25.4-7-66-2, Mohammed Siraj 25-4-67-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 24-1-74-0, Navdeep Saini 13-0-65-2, Ravindra Jadeja-18-3-62-4.

INDIA 1ST INNINGS

Rohit Sharma c & b Hazlewood 26, Shubman Gill c Green b Cummins 50, Cheteshwar Pujara batting 9, Ajinkya Rahane batting 5;
Extras: 6 (nb-1, w-5);
Total: 96/2 (45 overs).

Fall: 1/70 (Rohit), 2/85 (Gill).

Bowling: Mitchell Starc 7-4-19-0, Josh Hazlewood 10-5-23-1, Pat Cummins 12-6-19-1, Nathan Lyon 16-7-35-0.

per Ajinkya Rahane (5 batting) and Cheteshwar Pujara (9 batting) to cash in on the batting-friendly conditions on the third day.

Despite the cloud cover for the better part of the day, there was no swing on offer and lack of moisture meant that there wasn't any turn or for that matter, even some movement off the pitch.

The Australian attack looked more insipid than ever and Rohit, playing his first game in nearly two months, did all the hard work for nearly two hours before failing to check an uppish drive that was pounced by the bowler.

But it was a day when India had two openers, who were both ready to pull the fast bowlers during their opening spells and dominate Lyon while presenting his forward defence to Pat Cummins. It was Gill's maiden Test half century in just his second match.

The 21-year-old and Rohit Sharma (26) added 70 in 27 overs but more importantly set the stage for skip-

Australia getting 172 runs in just under 51 overs, largely due to some positive batting by Smith, Labuschagne and down the order Mitchell Starc (24).

But Jadeja and Bumrah, especially with the second new ball, were on target even as debutant Navdeep Saini (2/65) leaked a few runs due to sheer inexperience.

The Sydney track didn't have much help for the slow bowlers in the first two days but that didn't deter Jadeja from denying Labuschagne a deserving hundred.

In a stop-start first session, Labuschagne, who was looking good for a hundred, when he got an arm ball from Jadeja, which bounced a bit more denying him room for a non-existent cut shot.

The result was a smart catch by skipper Ajinkya Rahane, who positioned himself a bit wide at the first slip. Smith completed his half century in the very next over after Labuschagne's dismissal, off Ravichandran Ashwin (0/74), who has been well below his best during the five sessions that India had been in field.

The two batsmen had little trouble as they blended caution with

aggression perfectly during the first hour on a track that's offering slow turn with no visible demons in it.

The Indian bowlers continued bowling in straight lines with a heavy leg-side field that they have been employing since the second Test match.

What changed for Australia was the understanding of the opposition strategy better as they showed aggressive intent.

While Jadeja got a couple of wickets,



STEVE SMITH

Post Day 2 play reactions

RAVINDRA JADEJA

Run out of Smith: I will rewind and play this run-out as this is my best effort. A direct hit from outside the 30-yard circle and that's like a moment that gives you that satisfaction. Three or four wicket hauls are fine but this run-out will stay with me.

Bowling plan: The idea was to create pressure as this wasn't a wicket where you would get chance in every over. You can't bowl all deliveries at same pace on this wicket as there was no turn on offer. You had to mix and match and create angles.

Focus: Not just last 12-18 months, from the time I started playing, that's (focussing on batting and bowling) what has been my role. Whenever I am playing, I try to contribute in both departments of the game. And whenever I have been given opportunities, more often than not, I have delivered. Yes, outside India, my batting performances have been highlighted more. I am not thinking too much only want to cash in on every chance that I get.

If being promoted up the batting order: The higher up the order I bat, I play with more responsibility and playing with top order batsman, you interact and gain confidence. About what we need to do and what we don't need to do. Also you get a lot of time to plan and set your innings as per match situation. Initially, if I get start, then I play in a flow. It is good if I bat high up in the order.

About SCG surface: The approach tomorrow (Saturday) should be simple. One should spend time on the wicket. Australian bowlers are good and you won't get too many loose balls. You have to wait for it and that theory will suit our batting unit.

Praising Gill: He has the temperament to play a long innings. He got a good start today. He is showing good signs. Hopefully, he will have a long career.

STEVE SMITH

Successful tactic: I decided to be a bit more positive. I think early on, I hit him over his head, just put a bit of pressure on him so that he bowls where I wanted him to bowl. It was a concerted effort to do that and I was happy with the way I played him.

On his knock: In this game, I was probably a little more aggressive early and tried to put it back on the bowler a little bit more. I got off to a nice start, I was almost run-a-ball 20. So (!) got myself going and got into my innings and then you just have to play the game, absorb pressure when you need to, put pressure on when you need to and I did that pretty well in this innings.

Back in form: I have read a lot of things as I think I have said numerous time and plenty of people said I was out of form, so it was nice to come back I guess in the form, if that's what you want to call it. It was only two or three weeks ago when I scored two hundreds at the SCG. It kind of makes me laugh sometimes when people say that kind of things.

Australian team total: I think it's (338) a decent total. It would have been nice to score a few more. You always want more. It's a bit up and down the wicket. The boys bowled pretty well this evening and if continue to bowl really disciplined tomorrow, I think we are going to get some opportunities, could have easily been three or four tonight the way that the boys went about it, but I think we are in good place, start well in the morning and build some pressure and see how it goes.

Brisbane uncertainty: To my knowledge, not anything is changed from our point of view, we will wait and see and that is not our decision to make, we are the players and we go where we are told and do what we need to do, but we would like to play at the Gabba for sure.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Jan 8: Steve Smith's typically gutsy hundred was neutralised by Ravindra Jadeja's four-wicket haul and rookie Shubman Gill's fluent half century as a resolute India reached 96/2 after dismissing Australia for 338 on the second day of the third Test here, Friday.

The Indian bowlers, especially Jadeja (4/62) and the ever-dependable Jasprit Bumrah (2/66), were brilliant with their length on a flat SCG deck where Smith (131) along with Marnus Labuschagne (91) raised visions of a 450-plus total by taking the side to 206/2 at one stage.

But in the end, 338 was all they managed in a little less than 106 overs with none of the other batsmen making any telling contribution. It was only fitting that Jadeja's split second brilliance from the deep found Smith short of his crease.

Then it was the calm and collected Gill (50), who was assured during those cover drives off Nathan Lyon and equally breathtaking while presenting his forward defence to Pat Cummins. It was Gill's maiden Test half century in just his second match.

The 21-year-old and Rohit Sharma (26) added 70 in 27 overs but more importantly set the stage for skip-

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SHUBMAN GILL

The first two sessions could be ideally described as fascinating with

Tokyo Olympics still uncertain, feels IOC



Richard Pound, Canadian IOC member

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Jan 8: A senior member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has said he "can't be certain" the postponed Tokyo Olympics will open in just over six months because of the surging pandemic in Japan and elsewhere.

The comments by Canadian IOC member Richard Pound to British broadcaster the BBC came as Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared a state of emergency on Thursday for Tokyo and surrounding prefectures. "I can't be certain because the ongoing elephant in the room would be the surges in the virus," Pound said speaking about the future of the Tokyo Games.

Japan's emergency order, which is largely voluntary, will be in force until the first week of February. Tokyo reported a record of 2,447 new cases Thursday, a 50 per cent increase from the previous day — which was also a record day. Japan has attributed over 3,500 deaths to COVID-19, relatively low for a country of 126 million.

It's crunch time for Tokyo. Organizers say the Olympics will take place, but they are not expected to reveal concrete plans until spring. That's about the same time the torch relay begins March 25 with 10,000 runners

The Japanese public is becoming skeptical. A poll of 1,200 people last month by national broadcaster NHK showed 63 per cent favored another postponement or cancellation.

The budget for the Tokyo Olympics is also soaring. The new official budget is USD 15.4 billion, which is USD 2.8 billion above the previous budget. Several audits by the Japanese government have said the costs are closer to at least USD 25 billion.

The University of Oxford in a study published four months ago said these are the most expensive Summer Olympics on record. This was before the cost of the delay was added. All but USD 6.7 billion of Olympic funding is public money.

crisscrossing the country for four months leading to the opening ceremony July 23.

Pound also hinted athletes should be a high priority for a vaccine because they serve as "role models." Pound's comments seem to contradict IOC President Thomas Bach. Bach said in a visit to Tokyo in November that athletes should be encouraged to get a vaccine, but would not be required to. He also indicated they should not be a priority. Bach said that nurses, doctors and health care workers should be first in line for a vaccine, ahead of healthy, young athletes.

"Athletes are important role models, and by taking the vaccine they can send a powerful message that vaccination is not only about personal health, but also about solidarity and consideration for the well being of others in their communities," Pound said.

Reports suggest that the vaccine rollout in Japan is likely to be slowed by the need for local clinical trials. Some vaccines might not be readily available until May, although Suga said some would be ready in February.

Rakesh, Nauttam fashion Lions win



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 8: Rakesh K Pattanaik (54 n o; 1/7) and Nauttam Bhanja (3/17; 23 n o) helped Odisha Lions overpower Odisha Jaguars in their match of MGM Odisha T20 Cricket League at the Barabati Stadium scripting a seven-wicket victory here, Friday.

Opting to bat, Jaguars could muster only 99/8 in the stipulated 20 overs. Shamsul A Khan (29) and Girija P Rout (21) were the only batsmen to offer some resistance. For Lions, Nauttam was the star with the ball. In reply, Lions comfortably chased down the target, courtesy a wonderful half century by the 'Man of the match' Rakesh and Nauttam.

No recognition for NSFs not complying with Sports Code

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: National Sports Code is the law and the federations which are not complying with it cannot be granted recognition, the Delhi High Court Friday made it clear while granting a last opportunity to the Centre to show that the 41 NSFs granted recognition were complying with the requirements of the code.

The high court said in case of failure of the Centre in complying with its direction, the secretary of sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports will have to be present before in the hearing.

"We grant one last opportunity to the Respondent (Centre) to comply with the order of November 6, 2020 failing which we direct the secretary (sports), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to remain present during the next hearing. The affidavit shall be filed within 10 days," a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and

Najmi Waziri said.

The court listed the matter for further hearing January 22. The special bench was hearing a plea challenging the recognition granted to the 41 National Sports Federations (NSFs).

During the hearing, senior advocate Sachin Dutta and central government standing counsel Anil Soni, representing the Centre, sought some more time to file a reply in the matter.

This was opposed by petitioner lawyer and sports activist Rahul Mehra who said enough time has already been granted to the authorities who have filed an affidavit earlier and washed off their hands.

The bench, which was annoyed over non-compliance of its earlier order, said, "You need to change the game you are playing. You were playing soft ball, now you have to play hard ball. There is no compliance of the sports code. What is this happening?"

The bench observed that the

National Sports Development Code is the law of the today because the Supreme Court has said it has to be followed in totality.

"You (Centre) will not recognise those who are complying with the sports code. They will go out today itself. If you want to take over, do it," the bench said.

Mehra, in his plea, has claimed 'abject inaction' by the Centre with regard to alleged maladministration of NSFs and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

The high court, November 6 last year, had asked the Centre to show that the 41 NSFs granted recognition in October were complying with the requirements of the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011.

It had directed the ministry to show that each of the 41 NSFs, which were granted recognition, have complied with every requirement of the sports code as these bodies are funded by public money.

India junior eves hockey team set to tour Chile

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 8: The Indian junior women's hockey team will resume competition after more than a year following the coronavirus-induced break when it tours Chile for six matches later this month.

The Indian team, which last played against Australia and New Zealand in a three Nations tournament in December 2019, will take on junior Chile team January 17 and 18. Thereafter, the side will be up against the senior Chile team January 20, 21, 23 and 24.

THE SQUAD: Khushboo, Roshanpreet Kaur, Mahima Choudhary, Priyanka, Suman Devi Thoudam (C), Gagandeep Kaur, Ishika Chaudhary, Sushma Kumari, Akshata Dhekal, Baljeet Kaur, Chetna, Mariana Kujur, Ajmina Kujur, Reet, Prabhleen Kaur, Vaishnavi Phalke, Preeti, Jiwan Kishori Toppo, Mumtaz Khan, Rutuja Pisal, Sangita Kumari, Beauty Dungleung, Lalrindiki & Deepika.

Hockey India Friday named a 24-member junior women's squad, which will be led by defender Suman Devi Thoudam, while Ishika Chaudhary will serve as the vice-captain.

The tour will serve as a much-needed preparations for the Indian team for the all-important Junior World Cup this year.

The junior colts had a fair outing in Australia when they last travelled for an international assignment, winning two matches, drawing one and losing one.

Hockey India and the Chilean Field Hockey Federation will be creating a bio bubble for all the personnel involved in the tour.

The governing body said 'at all times the Indian team has to stick to a strict health bubble and move uniquely and exclusively from the hotel to the pitch and from pitch to the hotel'.

Colaco late strikes lift Hyderabad FC

AGENCIES

Goa, Jan 8: Liston Colaco came off the bench to score a brace helping Hyderabad FC register a 4-2 victory over NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) in their ISL encounter at Tilak Maidan, Friday.

With the scores locked at 2-2, Colaco put HFC ahead in the 85th minute. He dribbled into the box from the right, skipping past multiple challenges and curled a delightful strike into the top left corner of the net.

In the dying minutes of the game, he struck again. Aridane Santana chested a long ball into the path of Colaco who got in behind the



LISTON COLACO

NEUFC defence before slotting past the keeper with aplomb.

Earlier, HFC couldn't have hoped for a better start as Santana put them ahead in the third minute. Joel Chianese fired a low cross from the right flank into the box and Santana met the ball to open the scoring.

In the 36th minute, the setter turned scorer as Chianese doubled the HFC lead. However, the lead was shortlived. NEUFC pulled one back when Halizaran Narzary committed a foul on Ashish Mehta inside the box and referee pointed to the spot. Federico Gallego converted the spot-kick. Soon after, Benjamin Lambot struck the equaliser to level the scores at 2-2 at the halftime.