



## KEEN OBSERVER

Actor Subuhii Joshii says this is the right time to make a digital debut to reach the masses

LEISURE P2



## FARMERS' OUTREACH

BJP president JP Nadda launches a new campaign to woo the farmers of poll-bound West Bengal

TWO STATES P7



## IMMIGRATION BILL

US President-elect Joe Biden has said he will introduce immigration legislation 'immediately' after taking office January 20

INTERNATIONAL P10

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We always convert a crisis into opportunity. See, everybody is talking about Delhi border and nobody wants to know about China border

## 10 infants killed in Maha hospital fire

AGENCIES

**Bhandara (Maharashtra), Jan 9:** In a tragic incident, at least 10 new-born infants were suffocated in a fire that erupted in the children's ward of a government hospital in Maharashtra's Bhandara district early Saturday morning, officials said.

The fire, due to a suspected electrical short-circuit, erupted around 1.45 a.m. when the mothers and relatives of the infants were fast asleep and quickly engulfed the Sick & Newborn Care Unit of the Bhandara District General Hospital. Around that time, a nurse on duty happened to pass by the ward, noticed the smoke inside and raised an alarm. **MORE P9**

# Indonesian jet crashes after take-off with 62 on board

AGENCIES

**Jakarta, Jan 9:** A Sriwijaya Air plane crashed into the sea Saturday minutes after taking off from Indonesia's capital Jakarta on a domestic flight with 62 people on board, and their fate was not known. The Boeing 737-500, en route to Pontianak in West Kalimantan, disappeared from radar screens after taking off just after 2.30 p.m. (0730 GMT) - 30 minutes after the scheduled time because of heavy rain. Indonesian Transport Minister Budi Karya told a news conference that 62 people had been aboard Flight SJ 182, including 12 crew. The detik.com website quoted him as saying the plane crashed near Laki Island, some 20 km (12 miles) from the airport. Rescue agency Basarnas said in a statement it would send a team to the Thousand Islands area to help in the search for victims "after the crash of Sriwijaya Air SJ 182". Indonesia's Transportation Ministry said that the last contact with the plane, Sriwijaya Air Flight 182, was made at 2:40 p.m. local time. The Boeing 737-524 was bound for the city of Pontianak on the island of Borneo. The plane had 62 people aboard, according to the



Transportation Ministry. Four minutes after taking off amid a heavy monsoon season rain, following a delay because of bad weather, the 26-year-old plane lost more than 10,000 feet in altitude in less than 60 seconds, according to Flightradar24, the flight-tracking service. The Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency said that it had found pieces of debris in waters just northwest of Jakarta that it believed may be from the plane's wreckage, but that darkness and inclement weather had impeded its search. The area where the debris was found is known as the Thousand Islands.

■ **The Boeing 737-500**, en route to Pontianak in West Kalimantan, disappeared from radar screens after taking off just after 2.30 p.m. (0730 GMT)

■ **Indonesia's** Transportation Ministry said that the last contact with the plane, **Sriwijaya Air Flight 182**, was made at 2:40 p.m. local time

"Tomorrow we are going to survey the location," Soerjanto Tjahjono, the head of Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee, said on Saturday evening, dimming hopes that survivors would be found. The aviation sector in Indonesia, a developing country of thousands of inhabited islands, has been plagued by crashes and safety lapses for years. As Indonesian airlines, particularly low-cost carriers, grew rapidly to cover a vast archipelago, the domestic aviation industry has been undermined by shoddy aircraft maintenance, and cavalier adherence to safety standards.

## Naveen's assets, liabilities increase

His assets increased by ₹71 lakh, while liabilities rose to ₹1.25 cr

BISWA BHUSAN MOHAPATRA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** The assets of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik have increased by over ₹71 lakh during 2019-20, while his liabilities rose to ₹1.25 crore in 2019-20, a declaration by him said.

According to the property list of 20 ministers and Naveen uploaded by the government on its website, as of March 31, 2020, Naveen owned assets worth over ₹64.98 crore, including movable assets worth ₹1,34,04,502 and immovable inherited property valued at ₹63,64,15,261 crore. His overall assets have increased from ₹64,26,81,924.93 to ₹64,98,19,763 during the 2019-20 fiscal.

The Chief Minister owns a 1980-model Ambassador car valued at around ₹8,905 and jewellery worth about ₹2,89,587. He had term deposits worth ₹1.03 crore in State Bank of India and ₹16.76 lakh deposit in another bank, both located in New Delhi. Besides, he had deposits worth ₹10.56 lakh in State Bank of India in Bhubaneswar. Naveen also owns 22.7 acres farm land and a building at Tikrikhera village of Faridabad valued at ₹10,75,51,071, as per the valuation done in March 2017.

He owns 50 per cent share of his ancestral property situated at APJ Abdul Kalam Road in New Delhi, which is valued at ₹43,36,18,000 and two-thirds share of Naveen Niwas worth over ₹9.52 crore, as on August 18, 2017. The liabilities of Naveen also increased from ₹15 lakh to ₹1.25 crore during the period. Though the Chief Minister has repaid a loan of ₹15 lakh taken from his elder sister, Gita Mehta, in March 2015, he had taken ₹1.25 crore as advance against the sale of the farm land at Faridabad vide an agreement dated September 18, 2019. **MORE P3**

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## Vax drive from Jan 16

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 9:** India will launch its COVID-19 vaccination drive January 16 and priority will be given to nearly three crore healthcare and frontline workers, the government said Saturday. The decision was taken after Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the status of COVID-19 situation and vaccine preparedness.

"After the detailed review, it was decided that in view of the forthcoming festivals including Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Magh Bihu, etc, the COVID-19 vaccination will start from January 16, 2021," a government statement said.

After healthcare and frontline workers, priority will be given to those above 50 years of age and the

under-50 population groups with co-morbidities numbering around 27 crore, it added. "Emergency Use Authorisation or Accelerated Approval has been granted by the National Regulator for two vaccines (Covishield and Covaxin) which have established safety and immunogenicity," the government said.

Both vaccines are two-dose drugs, meaning they need two doses each to ensure maximum protection against the virus. On Tuesday the government said its CoWIN app (short for Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network) and its ecosystem would be used to manage the massive vaccination drive. The app is yet to be launched, but the government has said it will use Aadhaar numbers to authenticate vaccine beneficiaries.

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**HAILEE STEINFELD 'HONOURED' TO STAR IN HAWKEYE SERIES**

Actress-singer Hailee Steinfeld feels honoured to be part of Marvel's *Hawkeye* series. Steinfeld said that it felt 'so good' to finally make the announcement after keeping her participation in the series a secret for long, reports *people.com*.

**MINAJ TO PAY CHAPMAN \$450K TO SETTLE COPYRIGHT ROW**

Rapper Nicki Minaj will pay singer Tracy Chapman \$450,000 in order to settle a copyright dispute. Chapman had sued Minaj in 2018 for allegedly using portions of her hit 1988 track *Baby, can I hold you tonight* in the rapper's song *Sorry*.



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**ARIES**  
You are creative, and today you will prove to be resourceful and thereby successful! Okay, you are ambitious, says Ganesh, but don't bite off more than you can chew. Be confident of your abilities, work hard and have faith in providence.

**TAURUS**  
You will feel the burden of financial responsibilities on your shoulders today, says Ganesh. Do not let expenses bother you. Money will come to you from unexpected sources later in the day. If you can maintain an impartial judgement, then you will yield wonderful results on the financial front, advises Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you are likely to get encouragement and support for your endeavours from all quarters. You have a gift of gab and your ability to dispel tension with even the simplest of your remarks will be put to test. Still, you will rise to the occasion and prove your mettle.

**CANCER**  
If you are a stockbroker, you may feel that things are not going too well for you. Today, you may regret being a stockbroker. Manufacturers must delay the launch of a new product. However, after a waiting game, you may go on to launch the product with a fanfare.

**LEO**  
Everyone wants to be different. But little do they realise that they already are unique, says Ganesh. Today, you may meet a lot of such different people at work, some of whom may even test your patience.

**VIRGO**  
Take time off all by yourself and introspect today, says Ganesh. Office cubicle looks set to be a war front and pay due attention there, lest things turn to be more difficult, advises Ganesh. New love may just blossom today, and you may even enjoy a nice quiet evening with friends.

**LIBRA**  
Some days you get the carrot, while on others, it is the stick! Today is going to be one of those 'stick' days when it comes to dealing with your seniors, foresees Ganesh. It would be wise to delay auction bids or sealed tenders. Sometimes, waiting patiently is the best policy, especially if you are a job aspirant. Do not expect immediate success.

**SCORPIO**  
You shall be completely immersed in your routine today. It's the same old humbug of a day for you, says Ganesh. But this exhausting day may transform into an exciting evening - so be prepared to get surprised.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Cupid is hunting and you are the game today. Cupid's arrows will have you drift on the ocean of love and turbulent emotions. Your rescue is imminent, when a member of the opposite sex answers your SOS calls. But use your discretion as to which boat you hitch a ride back home, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
Work will suck you dry of your energy today, says Ganesh. Business rivals will go out of their way to mar your reputation and project you as incompetent. But to their dismay, you will prove to be way too smart to let them succeed in their sinister motives.

**AQUARIUS**  
Good news from across the seven seas brings cheer! If you're seeking a visa, you may get one today. Everything looks positive and it reflects in your mood. Share your happiness with your family, says Ganesh, and you will find it multiplies manifold.

**PISCES**  
Conflicts galore will come your way at the workplace today. Keep a calm head over your shoulders and do keep tabs on your tongue. Differences only crop up if there are substantial thought processes involved, and keeping this in mind ought to give you the perspective needed to get ahead, says Ganesh.

**Right time to make web debut: Subuhii**

**Bhopal:** Actress Subuhii Joshii enters the OTT space with the film titled *Fariha*, and she says this is the right time to make the digital move.

"I love television but I also know that web series and films are playgrounds for actors right now. As an artist, I have the urge and I feel it was about time I make my digital debut. *Fariha* seemed like an interesting story to do that," Subuhii, who is known for her role of Poonam Maheshwari in *Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai*, says.

"Digitalisation is a great step and I am totally okay with it. In fact, I also want to do something on that platform, which fortunately I have started doing. I think it's a great way to reach the masses," she shares.

Subuhii is excited to be back in action after spending most of last year at home owing to lockdown.



**Huma calls Sonakshi 'chor'!**

**Mumbai:** Actresses Huma Qureshi and Sonakshi Sinha were engaged in a fun banter online Saturday.

Sonakshi posted photos from a restaurant in Goa, where she dropped by with a friend.

Huma noticed Sonakshi's pigtail buns in the image, and commented on the Instagram post: "Did you copy my hairstyle... Chor."

To which, Sonakshi replied: "Show copy-right."

Actor Gulshan Devaiah joined the conversation and wrote: "She's been raving about you a lot lately."

In another post - a video of her skipping - Sonakshi encouraged fans to take up the exercise as a workout. "No gym no problem! SKIP. (Not the workout)," she captioned it.

Sonakshi is currently gearing up for her next release, *Bhuj: The Pride Of India*, co-starring Ajay Devgn, Sanjay Dutt, Sharad Kelkar, Ammy Virk, Pranitha Subhash and Nora Fatehi. The film is set against the backdrop of the 1971 Indo-Pak war.



**We all get stereotyped as actors: Arshad Warsi**

**New Delhi:** Arshad Warsi feels it is easy to get stereotyped as an actor, and very difficult to break away from it. The actor says he has managed to evade the image trap despite his overwhelming popularity in comic roles only because his serious roles were equally loved.

"It is difficult (to break away from stereotypes). We all get stereotyped - all of us do, every actor does. That's how it is. You do a certain role or you do something that people enjoy, and then that is what you keep getting because that is ringing the box office," Arshad said.

"It becomes difficult to get out of it. Fortunately for me, I've managed to do that purely because people have enjoyed my serious acting as well as my comedy," he added.

Last year, he made his digital debut with psychological thriller *Asur*. He was also seen in the role of a politician in film *Durgamati: The Myth*, which ditched traditional route of release and premiered digitally on Amazon Prime Video.

**Madhavan's Maara is visually striking but flawed**

*There are the rough edges in execution but the filmmaker shows promise mixing a poetic and philosophical approach in storytelling*

The first thing that strikes you about *Maara* is it is a visually striking film. That's also about the last thing that strikes you, because almost all else that goes on in between is lost in storytelling that is too lazy to hold interest.

For a film that tries to talk of the magic of life and love, the sense of ennui about its narrative is surprising. Dhillip Kumar's directorial unfolds a tad too languidly for its own good in a bid to create poignant drama - so much

so it begins to seem way too longer than its runtime of two and a half hours. The film is at the same time a modern day retelling of a fairytale and an emotional relationship drama that falls back on classic storytelling. Shradha Srinath plays Paru, a young woman who discovers the Kochi locality where she rents a house has walls painted with vignettes of the story she heard from a nun as a child. Captivated by the artwork, she decides to track down the artist, *Maara* (R. Madhavan).

Yet, the film never quite manages to go beyond its exquisite external gloss. The sub-plots that emerge with the various faces in *Maara*'s sketchbook will overshadow the core storyline. As too many characters fill the frame, Paru and *Maara* get lost in the crowd.

Madhavan exudes free-spirit- edness while Shradha essays her protagonist impressively, by turns inquisitive about and mesmerised by *Maara*'s world. She uses silences well, to speak out more effectively than any dialogue would.

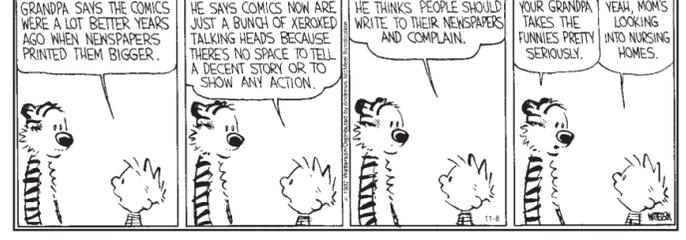
For Dhillip Kumar, *Maara* would seem like an ambitious first film. There are the rough edges in execution but the filmmaker shows promise mixing a poetic and philosophical approach in storytelling with feel-good treatment. His debut effort, at least, promises more assured imagination in the future.



**PEANUTS**



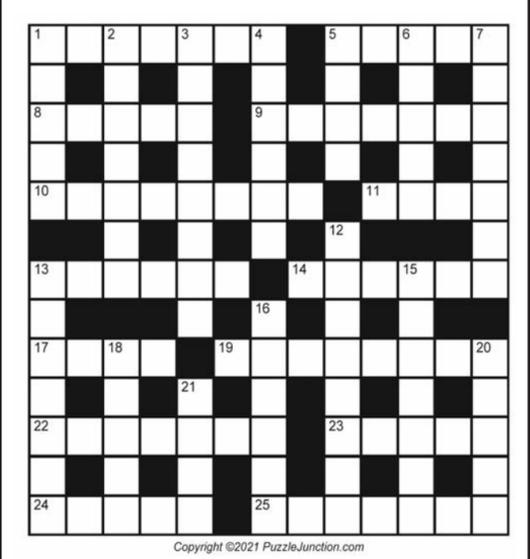
**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**BREVITY**



**FUN post CROSSWORD**



- Across**
- 1 Takes a hike?
  - 5 Train stop
  - 8 Map collection
  - 9 Set apart
  - 10 Suspenseful movie
  - 11 Hearty party
  - 13 Aid
  - 14 Absence of enthusiasm
  - 17 Inactive
  - 19 Jubilee starter?
- Down**
- 2 Drinking glass
  - 23 Seventh sign of the zodiac
  - 24 Synthetic fabric
  - 25 Horse-drawn carriages
  - 5 Plummet
  - 6 Public square
  - 7 Doctor's order
  - 12 Diamond
  - 13 High flier
  - 15 Sewing item
  - 16 Rose bush stickers
  - 18 Like some old pillows
  - 20 Blind parts
  - 21 Secluded valley

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

**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**

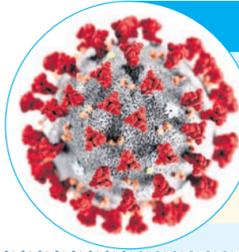
R	E	D	W	I	N	E	M	A	G	I	C
A	R	N	S	U	N	A					
O	A	E	O	T	R	R					
N	A	D	I	R	R	O	A	L	T		
S	C	H	O	O	L						
U	O		T	M							
C	A	L	Y	P	S	O					
C	Y	E	R	N	N	R					
O	R	C	T	O	R	S	O				
U	O	T	I	U	E	S					
R	O	W	D								
6	D	3	4	1	9	B	C	8	7	5	2
0	9	5	7	3	A	6	2	E	8	C	1
8	C	7	B	E	5	1	0	D	A	4	9
4	A	8	2	6	7	3	5	E	0	D	9
E	1	2	0	C	D	9	A	4	3	B	6
7	2	1	5	A	8	C	B	0	6	4	3
B	6	0	E	4	1	8	5	2	9	3	7
4	3	9	2	D	C	A	1	7	0	E	5
C	E	D	9	B	7	4	6	3	1	8	A
5	A	8	0	3	E	9	8	2	6	4	7
3	7	A	1	9	2	8	6	0	6	5	4
2	8	4	3	6	0	5	9	A	C	7	1
D	B	E	C	5	2	0	7	1	4	9	3
1	0	C	D	7	4	3	E	6	5	A	8
9	5	6	A	8	B	D	4	C	2	1	E

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**HANDLOOM EXPO**

People check out garments at Cottonfab-2020 being organised at the Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	8,96,67,152	6,41,91,248	19,27,386
India	1,04,31,639	1,00,56,651	1,50,798
Odisha	3,31,602	3,27,803	1,891

**Naveen's home turf lacks amenities: BJP**

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** In-charge of Odisha BJP D Purandeswari Saturday attacked the state government and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on the agenda of development and accused the ruling dispensation in the state of going slow on development activities.

She also said that the constituency of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik lacked several basic amenities and that the migration-prone districts of Odisha lack a migrant registry.

"People in Odisha now feel cheated as the party in power has betrayed them after getting the mandate. They have failed to keep their promises. People are struggling to get drinking water. In the Chief Minister's own constituency health infrastructure is in bad shape," she said.

She also added, "In Bhanjanagar I have seen nepotism in housing scheme. Moreover, many people in great numbers are migrating to other states due to poor employment avenues in the state. The state government does not have a proper registry of migrants. This shows how the BJD has ruled the state."

The BJP leader said, "I would like to request the CM to move out of his house and roam around the state to know the realities. The people of the state have voted for the CM and not to the bureaucrats."

**Bindusagar embodiment of nat'l integration: CM**



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik (R) launches the Swachh Bindusagar project through videoconferencing, Saturday. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and other dignitaries (top left) were also present at the event

**POST NEWS NETWORK**

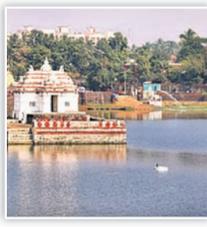
**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** As part of the 5T initiative of the state government, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday launched the Swachh Bindusagar project through videoconferencing.

"Bindusagar is associated with socio-cultural life of Bhubaneswar people. It is considered one of the holiest lakes of our country as it is linked to every holy water body of our country. It is an embodiment of national integration and it's our responsibility to keep it clean and green," Naveen said.

"It is also our responsibility to keep all other holy ponds and ghats around this Ekamra Khetra clean and green. I seek your cooperation to keep all such water bodies clean," he said.

Apart from Bindusagar lake, he stressed on renovation of all ponds and lakes at Ekamra Khetra for future purpose saying, "Clean water

**EKAMRA KSHETRA FACELIFT**



- Bindusagar lake cleaning project will be carried out at estimated cost of ₹70 lakh under CSR programme of Indian Oil
- The project cost includes running and maintenance costs for three years
- Chief Minister stressed on renovation of all ponds and lakes at Ekamra Kshetra for future purpose

is key step to prosperous life."

He said that Bhubaneswar – the temple city – is a gift of Lord Lingaraj and it is everyone's duty to keep it clean.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said, "Bindu Sagar at Lord Lingaraj's holy Ekamra Khetra has its distinct identity. Being the largest water body in Bhubaneswar

it carries rich divinity and closely associated with Odia culture and tradition. Various rituals of Lord Lingaraj are closely associated with this lake."

The Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) – Indian Oil (IOC) campus, Bhubaneswar in joint collaboration with Odisha Bridge Construction Corporation (OBCC), the most awaited project is being

unveiled, he said.

It is pertinent to mention that Bindusagar lake cleaning project will be carried out at estimated cost of Rs 70 lakh under CSR programme of Indian Oil. The project cost includes running and maintenance costs for three years.

Hydrodynamic Cavitation technology is used to reduce Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) & microbial population in the water body. It will also increase the aesthetic value of the natural water body. The technology is the latest and energy efficient, IOCL officials said.

Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) Vice-chancellor AB Pandit said, "The technology was used in cleaning up a lake in Maharashtra. In about three to four weeks' time, people can see change in the colour of the lake and water getting clearer."

**Aparajita, Panda face-off**

**BHUBANESWAR:** During the event, BJP MP from Bhubaneswar, Aparajita Sarnagi, and state Science & Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda engaged in war of words that led to a face-off between BJD and BJP workers assembled near the stage. A minor scuffle also broke out between BJD and BJP workers near the stage as they raised slogans against each other. The BJD youths continued to raise slogans and interrupted Union Minister Pradhan's speech.

Speaking on the occasion, Aparajita said the situation of holy ponds including the one located at Kedargouri is in dire strait. Though assurances are being given, nothing has changed, she said, adding, the renovation of four other ponds will also be taken up soon.

As regards the Bindusagar project, the BJP MP said there should

be coordination between the Centre and the state to complete the project within the stipulated period of four months. "We always emphasise on coordination. Wherever there is coordination there is success," said Aparajita.

Countering her, Panda claimed that the project would be completed within four weeks only.

"I don't want to play politics over the remarks of Sarangi but want to assure that the project will be completed within four weeks against the target of four months," said Panda in his speech.

Earlier, the Centre had assured to provide ₹5 crore each for the development of Dhauli and Konark. But they failed to keep their promise and provided only ₹1 crore each for both the projects. Later, the state completed the project with ₹5 crore from its own resources, he added.



BJD and BJP workers engage in a tussle

**CREATING AWARENESS**



Fire brigade personnel demonstrate their skills before children at the Fire Park on the premises of Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

**2 DETAINED FOR ELDERLY LADY'S LOOT & MURDER**

**POST NEWS NETWORK**

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** The Commissionerate Police Saturday detained two persons in connection with the loot and murder of an elderly woman in Nayapalli area here in wee hours of July 26, 2020.

The prime accused, Narayan Mohanty, who was earlier arrested for his alleged involvement in two robbery cases (479/20, 480/20) under Khandagiri police limits, was Saturday brought on two-day remand in connection with the murder of the lady. Narayan was nabbed around six month ago and has been lodged in Jharpada special jail.

Narayan's close associate Sagar Pradhan has also been detained by the police. He along with Mohanty attacked the elderly lady, Tulashi



Mishra, and decamped with her ornaments July 26, 2020.

One of the accused waited outside the house of the victim at IRC village while another went inside in a bid to loot. The accused attacked the lady with a sharp dagger when she tried to resist his loot attempt. The 70-year-old victim later succumbed to the injuries at private hospital here.

**Sagar and Narayan had attacked the elderly lady, Tulashi Mishra, and decamped with her ornaments July 26**

According to police sources, they have been closely following Narayan who was on their radar since the incident. He also allegedly spilled the beans before police intelligence inside the Jharpada jail. Subsequently, Commissionerate Police moved the court seeking his remand.

The sharp weapon used by the accused while committing the crime has reportedly been recovered by the cops.

**Pradhan urges devotees to follow norms**

**POST NEWS NETWORK**

**Puri, Jan 9:** Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan, Saturday visited Srimandir here by producing his Covid negative report before the shrine authorities.

Pradhan was accompanied by BJP leader and Puri MLA Jayanta Sarangi.

"I am fortunate to have a darshan of Lord Jagannath today. We all have the blessings of the Lord in this time of pandemic. Devotees should obey all the restrictions laid down by the authorities to visit the shrine," Pradhan said after coming out of Srimandir.



**The Union Minister welcomed Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's proposal to the Centre for the establishment of an international airport in Puri city**

The Union Minister, however, said that many prominent religious institutions have thrown their doors open for devotees without making Covid negative reports mandatory.

"I personally feel that the temple authorities should consider allowing devotees to visit Srimandir without the covid reports. Devotees can be allowed to enter the shrine through its four gates. The temple administration should also take into account the financial condition of devotees in connection with the mandatory covid report issue," Pradhan said.

The Union Minister welcomed Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's proposal to the Centre for the establishment of an international airport in Puri city. "Puri is a popular tourist destination. An airport should be set up here for welfare of tourists. Besides, it would also accelerate prosperity of the city residents," he said.

**26 teachers, two students test positive for Covid**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** As many as 26 teachers and two students have tested positive for Covid-19 in Gajapati district after the reopening of schools, prompting the administration to send a senior officer to the district Saturday to take stock of the situation.

Though the development has sparked fears across the state, the administration has urged everyone not to panic as their samples were tested before the reopening of schools Friday. "There are 26 teachers and two students among the 31 persons who have tested positive for Covid-19 in Gajapati district in the last two days," Chief District Medical Officer P K Patra said.

A senior official of the School and Mass Education department, however, said the detection of Covid-19 cases among students and teachers has nothing to do with the reopening of schools for students of Classes X and XII.

**Panchayati Raj minister owns ₹10.35-crore assets**

**POST NEWS NETWORK**

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** The assets of Panchayati Raj Minister Pratap Jena have grown by Rs 42 lakh in a year. Jena owns total properties worth Rs 10.35 crore and has taken a home loan of Rs 30 lakh during 2019-20 financial year.

As per the property declaration by Health Minister Naba Kishore Das, he is having two revolvers and a rifle. He also owns over 80 commercial vehicles.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain owns movable assets worth Rs 43.25 lakh while his wife owns movable assets worth Rs 1.09 crore. The immovable properties of Swain stand at Rs 1.60 crore, of which the lion's share remains in the name of his wife. He is also having a loan of Rs 20.32 lakh.

The net asset of Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari till March 31 of 2020 stood at Rs 4.24 crore, registering a rise of Rs 31 lakh as compared to the previous year's properties.

Similarly, Minister of State, Home Dibya Shankar Mishra has declared that he has properties worth Rs 7.31 crore till March last year. On the other hand, Sports and Information Technology Minister



Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain owns movable assets worth Rs 43.25 lakh while his wife owns movable assets worth Rs 1.09 crore

Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari's assets stood at Rs 4.24 crore till March 31, 2020

MoS, Home Dibya Shankar Mishra has declared that he has properties worth Rs 7.31 crore till March last year

Tusharkanti Behera is having properties worth Rs 32 lakh, which include a 4,830 sq ft plot at Chandaka on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, a car worth Rs 5 lakh and 140 grams

of gold. Similarly, Women and Child Development Minister Tukuni Sahu is having immovable properties worth Rs 1.94 crore and six vehicles among other movable properties.

Likewise, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash was having 27 landed properties and two houses till March last year.

Addressing the first meeting of the newly-constituted Biju Janata Dal (BJD) State Council last month, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had said, "Starting from sarpanch, block chairman, Zilla Parishad president, vice-president, MLAs, minister and the Chief Minister will furnish their property details every year. It will be put in public domain."

**Min inaugurates sports injury & rehab centre**

**POST NEWS NETWORK**



**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** Health Minister Naba Kishore Das Friday inaugurated a sports injury and rehabilitation centre at CARE Hospital here. Former Indian hockey player Dilip Tirkey and former Indian cricketer and national selector Debashish Mohanty besides the top officials of the hospital attended the inaugural ceremony.

The minister said that with the development of sports in the state, the need of such a centre has been long due. "Odisha has developed into a sports hub where national and international sports are organised. This centre is now likely to cater to the needs of the sportspersons in the state," the minister said.

Tirkey said that for the first time the state capital got a dedicated centre for sports injury. "It was not there in Odisha earlier," he said. Veteran cricketer Debashish Mohanty cited his own experience how he had to visit other states for

his knee injury. He also said that until now many sportspersons are visiting Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai for such services which started in the state capital today.

The hospital administration said that the department of Sports Injury and Rehabilitation in the hospital is the first of its kind in Odisha and Eastern India.

The department has been envisioned to support elite sports performance, injury prevention and multidisciplinary management through field-to-field care to athletes, early diagnosis, appropriate surgical or non-surgical management and protocol based rehabilitation.

The centre is also likely to help in training the medical staff on injury management and help in research works on the issue.

Group CEO of CARE Hospitals, Jasdeep Singh and Chief operating Officer of CARE Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, Gurrit Kaur Sethi were also present in the inaugural ceremony.

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.0°C	32.8°C
MIN	16.8°C	15.8°C
Humidity	84%	78%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Mainly clear sky

# Land fraudsters on the prowl in City

## UPPING THE ANTE



Female health workers engaged at different Covid Care Hospitals across the state demonstrate at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, demanding job regularisation

### Twin frauds

A 70-year-old woman, who stays with her husband at Ghatikia under Khandagiri police limits, purchased a piece of land at Aiginia from Sudarshan Sahoo March 28, 1990. She converted the same into homestead land by submitting application at the Tehsildar office. She got patta during the land settlement in 2013-14. The lady due to some bank related issues had recently applied for the Encumbrance Certificate. However, she was shocked to find that someone has sold the same plot at Rs 19 lakh with fake documents in 2019. She also found that the fraudsters have mentioned another woman as the owner of the same plot. The lady has lodged a complaint with Khandagiri police.



Prasant Kumar Jena had purchased a plot at Sankarpur Mauja from Manoj Kumar Lenka in 2011. However, when he went to erect a boundary wall on the plot, a person appeared there and claimed himself as the owner of the same plot. Later, Manoj who was present at the spot confessed to have sold the wrong plot. He promised Jena to arrange another plot for him soon. Jena who had already given more than Rs 6 lakh to Manoj agreed to this. Meanwhile, Jena was posted at a branch in Hyderabad. Whenever Jena came to Bhubaneswar, he met Manoj and his other associates to get the plot, but to no avail. Failing to get a plot, Jena lodged a complaint with Sahid Nagar police.

tion against the land broker who has cheated him. Jena alleged in his complaint that he purchased a plot at Sankarpur Mauja from Manoj Kumar Lenka in 2011. However, when he went to erect a boundary wall on the plot, a person appeared there and claimed himself as the owner of the same plot. Later, Manoj who was present at the spot confessed to have sold the wrong plot. He promised Jena to arrange another plot for him soon. Jena who had already given more than Rs 6 lakhs to Manoj agreed to this. Meanwhile, Jena was posted at a branch in Hyderabad. Whenever Jena came to Bhubaneswar, he met Manoj and his other associates to get the plot, but to no avail. Failing to get a plot, Jena lodged a complaint with Sahid Nagar police.

the address given in the fake document. The photo of the lady attached in the documents belongs to some other person. The lady lodged a complaint with Khandagiri police a few days back. Similarly, the manager of a nationalized bank has also been cheated by a fraudster of around Rs 6 lakhs. Prasant Kumar Jena is currently posted as the branch manager of a nationalized bank at Balasore. He has lodged a complaint with Saheed Nagar police seeking ac-

## Routray demands tightening of CM's security

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** Congress leader Suresh Routray Saturday urged the police to take stringent action against suspected people who allegedly conspired to pose a threat to the life of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. "I am saddened by the news of the Chief Minister's Office getting a letter warning a planned attack on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. I want to request the police department to take steps immediately in this regard and trace all the 17 cars which are said to be used to target the CM," Routray said.

**I am saddened by the news of the Chief Minister's Office getting a letter warning a planned attack on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. I want to request the police department to take steps immediately in this regard and trace all the 17 cars which are said to be used to target the CM**

He also said, "Whosoever it may be the criminals irrespective of their political connections, they must be tracked and arrested. If the CM of a state is under threat what will happen to the people of the state. Our Chief Minister is the leader of the state and a respectable person. Strict actions are the need of the hour."

## CM, Mahtab in panel to observe 125th birth anniversary of Netaji



Beautification of boundary walls of Netaji Museum in Cuttack in progress

**New Delhi, Jan 9:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and BJD MP Bhartruhari Mahtab are among a 85-member high level committee formed by the Union government to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in a befitting manner, official sources said, Saturday. According to a gazette notification issued Saturday, the committee, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will decide on the activities for a year-long commemoration of Netaji's birth anniversary beginning January 23, 2021. The members of the committee include distinguished citizens, historians, authors, experts, family members of Netaji as well as eminent persons associated with the Azad Hind Fauj (INA). Also, the committee will lend guidance to the commemoration activities in Delhi, Kolkata and other places associated with Netaji and Azad Hind Fauj, both in India as well as overseas.

Other members of the committee include Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman, Narendra Singh Tomar, Smriti Irani, Prakash Javadekar, Jitendra Singh and Prahlad Singh Patel. Minister of State for Environment Babul Supriyo and Minister of State for Women and Child Development Debasree Chaudhuri are also among the members. Former PMs HD Deve Gowda and Manmohan Singh have also been named as the members of the committee which also has Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha Harivansh and former Lok Sabha Speakers Manohar Joshi, Shivraj Patil, Meira Kumar and Sumitra Mahajan. Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Odisha, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya have been included in the committee. Born in Cuttack January 23, 1897, Netaji went on to play a key role in India's freedom movement. Also, he is known for establishing the Azad Hind Fauj.

## COLLECTOR REVIEWS WORK FOR PURI MEDICAL COLLEGE

**Puri, Jan 9:** Collector Samarth Verma Saturday reviewed the progress of work for Shree Jagannath Medical College at Baliguali here. The Collector directed the officials to expedite the land acquisition process for the medical college. He also put emphasis on the speedy construction of a connecting road to the health institute. Moreover, the Collector discussed various issues with the officials of a private agency engaged to construct buildings and other infrastructure for the medical college. "Steps are being taken to construct the 650-bed medical college within the scheduled timeframe and provide quality healthcare to the residents of Puri. The progress of work for the health institute is satisfactory," Verma said. Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) Sujata Mishra and officials



Collector Samarth Verma reviews the progress of work for Puri medical college

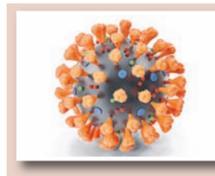
of various departments were present at the review meeting. The meeting also held discussions with regard to a proposal for raising the number of beds at the Puri district headquarters hospital (DHH). "The DHH needs additional beds to cope with the rise in population in the district. There is a proposal to create 300 more beds at the DHH. Today's meeting deliberated on all issues with regard to the district hospital," said an official of the district administration.

## Special train between Bhub & Bangiriposi

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** The ECoR will run a special train between Bhubaneswar and Bangiriposi for the convenience of passengers. Bhubaneswar-Bangiriposi Special will leave Bhubaneswar at 1730 hrs and reach Bangiriposi at 2305 hrs from January 12 to February 28, 2021. In the return direction, 02891 Bangiriposi-Bhubaneswar Special will leave Bangiriposi at 0420hrs and will arrive at Bhubaneswar at 1000hrs from January 13 to March 1, 2021. This train will stop at Cuttack, Jajpur Keonjhar Road, Bhadrak, Markona, Soro, Balasore, Rupsa, Thakurtota, Juggura, Jugal, Betnoti, Krishnachandrapur and Baripada between Bhubaneswar and Bangiriposi from both the directions.

## State sees 206 fresh Covid cases, 1 death

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** The state Saturday reported 206 new Covid-19 cases, taking the virus caseload in Odisha to 3,31,602, a senior health and family welfare (H&FW) department official said. The toll, on the other hand, rose to 1,891 as a 47-year-old woman from Malkangiri district, who was undergoing treatment for Covid-19, died. She also had diabetes and asthma, the official pointed out. Of the new cases, 119 were reported from different quarantine centres. Angul district recorded the highest 27 new cases followed by Bolangir and Sundargarh with 26 cases each. There are 2,124 active cases in the coastal state at present while 3,27,534 patients have so far recovered from the viral infection. Odisha has so far tested 71.40 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 29,127 Friday. The coastal state's positivity rate stands at 4.64 per cent, the H&FW department official said. Meanwhile, another 269 Covid patients recovered in Odisha, taking the total recoveries in the coastal state to 3,27,803, the H&FW department tweeted. The recovered cases include 41 from Cuttack, 31 from Angul, 26 from Sambalpur, 21 from Nuapada, 19 from Sundargarh, 15 from Mayurbhanj and 14 from Khurda, the department pointed out.



Angul district recorded the highest 27 new cases followed by Bolangir and Sundargarh with 26 cases each. A 47-year-old woman from Malkangiri district who was undergoing treatment for Covid-19 died.

## LOW FOOTFALL



As temperature continues to rise, the temporary winterwear market at Khannagar area in Cuttack wears a deserted look, Saturday

## Saranggi reviews freshwater activities at Capital's CIFA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying (FAHD) Pratap Chandra Sarangi Saturday reviewed freshwater aquaculture research activities being carried out by the institute at ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture here. The minister underscored the need for developing sustainable technology for better production keeping the safety of the environment in mind and to carry out result-oriented research. He suggested that CIFA should sign MoU with state & UT Departments for faster dissemination of aquaculture technologies. The minister also interacted with the scientists in the afternoon and urged them to develop technology packages to attract rural unemployed youth; develop entrepreneurship and contribute to realizing the Prime Minister's vision of doubling farmers' Income by the year 2022. The minister also visited CIFA farm facilities and interacted with researchers working on Bio-floc, tilapia farming, genetically improved rohu 'jayanti' scampi, carps, minor carps, aquaponics, murrel, ornamental fish, feed mill, KVK. He inaugurated the recirculatory aquaculture system for murrel and showed keen interest in diversified fish species including tilapia and pengba. Moreover, three e-booklets and one book entitled "Actionable Strategies for Increasing the Freshwater Aquaculture Production in India" was released. The institute has earlier launched an official WhatsApp channel and started offering training programmes in a virtual mode. During Jan-March 2021, the institute will be conducting as many as 23 virtual training programmes on various aspects of freshwater aquaculture. It would also create awareness about the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) among fish farmers.



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# Vig probe of Kelua embankment breach

LOKAYUKTA HAS ASKED ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY TO SUBMIT PROBE REPORT BY MARCH 12

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Jajpur, Jan 9:** The Odisha Lokayukta Friday ordered a vigilance inquiry into the breach of Kelua embankment at Rampur area under Dharmasala block in Jajpur district which was allegedly blown off with dynamites during floods in August, 2020.

The Lokayukta has ordered the director of Vigilance to ensure that a preliminary inquiry under his active supervision is conducted either by an SP or ASP ranked officer and submit a report within two months.

Submission of a detailed investigation report in this regard by the state anti-corruption agency has been scheduled for March 12, 2021. The vigilance department will conduct a preliminary inquiry on three major aspects.

Firstly whether breaches occurred in the road embankment were due to sub-standard construction work resulting in washing away of the substantial portion of the road embankment; secondly, if breaches were created



Hearing an RTI application over river embankment damage, the Lokayukta had issued notices to six persons including Dharmasala MLA Pranab Kumar Balabantary October 22, 2020.

An RTI activist filed a complaint, alleging that the embankment road of the irrigation department from Gokarneswar to Budhalinga Majhipada road in Jajpur was severely damaged due to the intentional use of explosives during floods last August. Hundreds of acres of farmlands got inundated

in the road embankment to cover up corruption motive; thirdly, whether any corrupt practice was resorted to in the construction by any public servant or any other person, the office order stated.

Hearing an RTI application over river embankment damage, the Lokayukta had issued notices to six persons including Dharmasala MLA Pranab Kumar Balabantary October 22, 2020.

The complaint was filed by an RTI activist alleging that the de-

struction of irrigation embankment from Gokarneswar to Budhalinga Majhipada road in Jajpur district during floods last August left over hundreds of acre of farmlands inundated and several crops damaged.

The RTI activist, Sarbeswar Beura, had alleged in his application that the irrigation embankment road was severely damaged due to the intentional use of explosives. The dynamite blast had led to massive crop damage and had rendered many local villagers homeless.

The damage was entirely man-made and conspired by the local MLA which was done to cover up low-quality of road construction work, the RTI activist had alleged in his much-debated complaint.

A road breach of about 300ft width was created on Kelua embankment at Rampur area under Dharmasala block. Over 50,000 local villagers belonging to seven panchayats under Dharmasala block in Jajpur district had suffered during the floods.

# Bhuban NAC reels from admin apathy, poor planning

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhuban, Jan 9:** Bhuban is regarded as the largest village in Asia. The notified area council (NAC) tag was accorded to this village in 1971. This NAC comprises 15 wards and is inhabited by more than 27,000 people. Famous for brass metal wares and breathtaking tourist spots, thousands of tourists and traders from different parts of the state and outside visit this NAC regularly. Basic infrastructure in the town, however, hasn't kept up with the demand thanks to the gross administrative negligence.

Keeping the increasing number of population and visitors in view, six community toilets were inaugurated November 25, 2016. Areas such as Godipokhari, Kolha Sahi, Prustypokhari, Nuapokhari and ward nos-3 and 14 each got a toilet. They were each constructed at a cost of ₹9,60,000.

But it was alleged that these toilets were inaugurated hastily. This is perhaps the reason why toilets were then left without basic facilities. The toilets lack in such facilities even today. They don't have electricity connection resulting in failure in lifting water to overhead tanks. Nor is there anyone to take care of these toilets.

The toilets have been lying unused for a long period. Curiously, the NAC administration these days is allegedly spending several lakhs of rupees to give these unused toi-



Basic infrastructure in the town hasn't kept up with the demand thanks to the gross administrative negligence

lets a fresh makeover.

The NAC administration's alleged unmindful spending of government money does not stop here. At a time when the old six community toilets are yet to be made functional, the NAC is constructing nine more toilets. These under construction toilets at Godipokhari, Hingula shrine area, Prusty Pokhari, Aahaar centre, Batatarini, Kolha Sahi, Tolankabereni, Taxi stand and tehsil office are on the verge of completion.

Many people here termed this as lack of foresight. Sanatan Patra, a social activist, alleged nobody is worried for the development of Bhuban. The money coming to the

NAC for carrying out developmental works is being siphoned off. Administrative officers are looking the other way. The district administration should intervene.

"After serving the nation, I have returned to my birthplace Bhuban. Here it pains me the way the developmental works are being carried out. Even after 29 years of getting an NAC status, Bhuban does not have a single functional community toilet. Nothing can be worse than this," army veteran Santosh Patnaik rued.

When contacted, tehsildar Prabhas Ranjan Behuria, who is also officiating as executive officer of Bhuban NAC, said that the NAC has so many issues. It has been several days since he was given the additional charge. "After taking charge, some of the issues have been addressed. Special attention will be given to make the already constructed and under-construction community toilets functional," he added.

# 40 creeks to be renovated; 27 bridges to be built

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Padmapur, Jan 9:** Basudevpur block in Bhadrak district is set for a major infrastructure overhaul with the administration insisting on fast tracking of development.

According to reports, 40 creeks will be renovated to boost irrigation while 27 bridges will be built to push connectivity in various parts of the block.

The state's first model creek was executed at Badakiari of Lunga panchayat in 1980 so as to drain off rain water as well as irrigating farmlands.

Over years, Nuasahi creek and various distributaries of Mantei river became shallow and were choked with alluvial deposits. As a result, many areas have been facing water logging with flood-water failing to drain off.

In summer, farmers face difficulties in availing water from creeks and distributaries.

MLA Bishnubrata Routray laid the foundation stone for a number of projects. About 40 creeks will be dredged for irrigation while 27 new bridges will be constructed. ₹5 crore has been estimated for these projects.

People of Lunga, Guagadia, Jagannathprasad and Edatal panchayats will benefit from these project in the irrigation and communication sectors. Officials say, these projects will be completed within 11 months.

# AESTHETIC LOOK



An artist busy painting a boundary wall of the district headquarters hospital in Angul, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# Village in Athagarh block declared Containment Zone

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Athagarh, Jan 9:** After detection of 16 COVID-19 cases in Khanduali village under Athagarh block in Cuttack, the district administration declared the village as Containment Zone Friday afternoon.



The containment restrictions will come into effect from Saturday morning (January 9) and will remain in force for the next seven days, an official order of the district administration stated.

Health camps will be set up in the village and contact tracing activities will be intensified. Villagers have been asked not to move out of their homes to prevent probable spread of the deadly virus.

The asymptomatic patients will remain in home isolation. The local

# Staff of 5 Keonjhar schools in trouble for flouting Covid norms

**KEONJHAR:** One day after reopening of the schools across the state, teachers and staff of five schools in Keonjhar district were penalised for paying scant regard to COVID-19 guidelines in their institutions.

The District Education Officer's order stated that the salaries of the teachers and staff have been put on hold.

The salaries of headmasters, teaching and non-teaching staff of SMR High School, Jharbelda (aided), Government High School, Khireitangiri, Bishoipat Government High School,

Jamunaposi, PMB High School, Bolaniposi (new GIA) and Jhalamani High School, Denuan (new GIA) are held up for the month January 2021 until further clearance, stated the order.

Sources said, the DEO had visited different schools in the district Friday, the first day of reopening of the schools across the state after remaining closed for about nine months.

During his visit, he found negligence on part of school authorities and violation of COVID-19 SoP issued by the State School & Mass Education Department regarding the reopening of schools.

administration will make arrangements for supply of medicines, milk, vegetables, groceries and other essential items to the villagers inside the Containment Zone, a senior administrative official said.

Notably, the district administration had earlier declared Nuasahi village under Niali block in Cuttack as Containment Zone December 26. The containment restrictions remained in force till January 4.

# Nuapada DLO held by Vigilance

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Tarabod, Jan 9:** Vigilance sleuths Friday arrested Nuapada district labour officer (DLO) Sarat Kumar Panigrahi while accepting ₹40,000.

According to sources, Panigrahi was accepting the bribe in his office at Khariar Road in Nuapada. The complainant, Srinivas Behera, belongs to Palsada village under Boden police limits in the district. The unscrupulous official demanded a bribe from the complainant to issue labour cards to 200 persons in the village.

"As per government norms, the prescribed fee for the registration of a labour card is only ₹70. Accordingly, the complainant should have deposited ₹14,000 against the issue of 200 cards. However, Panigrahi was demanding ₹40,000 for 200 labour cards," Bhawanipatna Vigilance DSP Satyaban Mahananda said.

"Acting on a complaint by Behera, we nabbed him red-handed. A case was registered against him. The accused was forwarded to court Saturday," added the anti-corruption agency official.

# Fake sauce-making unit busted in Jajpur

**JAIPUR:** An adulterated sauce manufacturing unit was busted in Jajpur. Acting on a tip-off, the Barchana police and the local administration jointly raided the unit at Kundal area under Badchana police limits late Friday night. A huge stock of adulterated tomato and chili sauce bottles were seized. The raid revealed that the unit had been in the business of manufacturing, packaging adulterated sauce and selling packaged bottles with labels of branded companies.

# BARABANKA, NATURE'S GIFT TO DHENKANAL DISTRICT



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Jan 9:** When you travel along this serpentine road passing through hills and verdant green jungles located at an altitude of 2,239 feet above the mean sea level, it gives you a feeling of travelling along a hilly road either in Shimla or Manali.

This winding road famous as 'Barabanka' is in Dhenkanal. It gets its name perhaps because it has many turns as the word 'Barabanka' is the portmanteau of Bara and Banka mean 12 and turns respectively. A nature's gift to Dhenkanal district.

Nature has bestowed abundant natural beauty on Dhenkanal district. This is why the tourism map of Odisha cannot be imagined without Dhenkanal. The Shaivite shrine of Kapilas has been a source of attraction for both devotees and nature lovers for ages. And 'Barabanka' is closely associated with the shrine where

Shree Chandrasekhar Jew is worshipped.

The shrine located at an altitude of 2,239 feet from the mean sea level can be reached on foot or by vehicle. If the foot track is chosen, you have to climb a flight of 1,352 steps.

According to researcher and columnist Antaryami Mishra, the temple was constructed in 1246. At that time, devotees would have no choice but to trek a hilly path to reach the shrine.

"It was in 1909 when the shrine witnessed developmental works undertaken by then Dhenkanal king. In those days, the king and his family members would visit the shrine sitting on caparisoned elephants. A path was laid out up to the temple through the hills in 1916. After independence, the path was reconstructed in phases. Once a narrow pathway, it has now become a pucca road. Since the road is serpentine with curves, the road has been made wide enough with con-

crete sidewalls to ensure zero accident," Mishra said.

To reach the temple, one has to travel five kilometres on 'Barabanka' road from the foot of Kapilas hill. The beauty of this five-kilometre stretch lies in its 12 curves. While travelling, visitors get transported to a different land with lush green forests on both sides, with trees standing as if to welcome them amidst the pleasant chattering of colourful birds. In order to facilitate them to enjoy nature, the road between curve no-7 and 9 has been made extra-wide. Visitors park their vehicles here and capture the beauties of nature in their cameras and mobile phones. Lately, it has earned the moniker of 'Selfie Point'.

"'Barabanka' is in no way inferior to Ooty or its ilk. The ranges of hills, verdant green jungles make our journey worthwhile. I must mention a huge banyan tree at Curve No-10. It not only offers a suitable place to take rest for some time but also makes the scenery perfect," Sarat Behera, a visitor, observed.

Echoing the same, another visitor Satyabrata Sahu praised 'Barabanka' saying it is a perfect place for a getaway. One should take some times out of the busy and burdensome life schedule and come here to enjoy nature's gift with clouds passing by. When asked, District Rural

Development Agency (DRDA) project director (PD) Narottam Behera said on the occasion of 'Jagar festival' and 'Shiva Chaturdashi', the numbers of visitors to the shrine go up significantly causing traffic issues. The proposal placed for illumination of the entire 'Barabanka' road has been accepted. In coming days, the illumination work will begin on the stretch

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice No. eT-CRW-MCS-EL-7-2020  
NAME OF WORK : ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR LHB RMPU WITH CONTROL PANELS FITTED IN AC COACHES (LHB TYPE) AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR OF EAST COAST RAILWAY FOR 12 MONTHS.  
Advertised Value (₹) : 1,43,31,291/-, EMD (₹) : 2,21,700/-, Period of Completion: 12 Months.  
Bidding Start Date : 15.01.2021, Date and time of closing of tender : 1500 hrs of 29.01.2021.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete details including e-tender documents are available at <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.  
Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Carriage Repair Workshop, Mancheswar PR-481/L/20-21

**INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK**  
Regional Office: Bhubaneswar, B/2 West Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007, Ph.: 0671-2544171  
Empanelment of Direct Selling Agents/Home Loan Counselors Vehicle Loan Counselors for Sourcing of Housing/Vehicle Loans on commission basis  
1. Eligibility Criteria- Any individual age between 18 years and 68 years.  
2. Should be local resident, with minimum qualification graduate (10+2+3) and able to communicate effectively in Odia, Hindi and English  
3. Should possess sound knowledge about financial products available in market especially Housing Loans/ Vehicle Loans  
4. Approved agents for selling NSCS/Life Insurance Policies/Mutual Funds/Govt. approved valuers/Chartered Accountants Tax Consultants and Real Estate Brokers having prior experience in selling Home Loans, mortgage backed products, auto loans, credit/debit cards, demat accounts and any other similar financial products will be preferred.  
5. Must have phone facility and operate from his/her place. Bank will not provide any office/ infrastructure/ reimbursement of any expenses.  
6. Well-established non-individual Firms/Companies having expertise in the above fields may also apply.  
Empanelment camp will be held on 18.01.2021 & 19.01.2021 from 10.00 a.m. onwards. Please visit Along with all the necessary documents original and photocopies and 4 passport sized photographs.  
Address- Indian Overseas Bank, Sahid Nagar Branch, B/2 West Sahid Nagar , Bhubaneswar.Pin-751007  
Note- Nature of empanelment is purely on commission basis and renewal of agreement is based on performance as set by Bank from time to time.  
Chief Regional Manager

**OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BELPAHAR**  
Ph.-06645-250458, Fax: 06645-250236, Email: nacbelpahar@gmail.com  
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE  
BID REFERENCE NO.EO/BPHM/03/2020-21  
BID IDENTIFICATION NO.2021\_ORULB\_65301  
TENDER CALL NOTICE NO.42 DT. 08.01.2021  
Bid documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. website i.e. [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)  
Name of the work: Individual Civil Construction works  
No. of works: 02 Nos.  
Estimated cost: Varies from Rs.46,87,000.00 to Rs.53,27,000.00  
Period of completion: 5 calendar months  
Date & time of availability of the bid documents in the portal: From dt.11.01.2021 at 10.00 A.M. to dt.25.01.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.  
Submission of original financial documents (Bid cost & EMD) by Regd. Post/Speed Post: Dt.26.01.2021 to dt.01.02.2021 during office hours on working days.  
Bids received online shall be opened on: 11.00 A.M. on dt.02.02.2021  
Name & address of the officer inviting bid: Executive Officer, Belpahar Municipality  
Further the details can be seen from the procurement portal: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). If any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender shall be published in the above website only.  
Sd./-Executive Officer, Belpahar Municipality

FOCUS AMERICA

# BAN TRUMP NOW



**The revolution always devours its own children, and sometimes their fathers, too. If Republicans fail to de-Trumpify fully and immediately, they will learn that for themselves - but not before things get much, much worse**

call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the summer of 2019, when he threatened to withhold US military aid unless Ukraine announced an investigation into Biden's son, Hunter. After getting off scot-free for that abuse of his office, Trump went on to have another perfect chat in the winter of 2020, when he tried to blackmail Georgia's Republican secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, into falsifying the result of last November's election on his behalf. All those Republicans who have condemned the second call should be asking themselves why they condoned the first one.

If there is no punishment for the insurrection at the Capitol, congressional Republicans will again be signaling their own complicity in the crime. The message will be that this, too, is acceptable: a sitting president may indeed incite violence against one of the republic's three political branches.

Some will worry that a second impeachment and a permanent ban would merely provoke Trump's 'base.' But this argument no longer holds water. No matter what Democrats or half-way responsible Republicans like Senator Mitt Romney do or don't do, Trump and his cheerleaders in the right-wing media will incite the move-

ment anyway. After all, right-wing populism is not subject to a reality check; an actual vote count is practically irrelevant for people who see themselves as the only 'real Americans' (and therefore the only ones that count). Mobilising these supposedly 'real Americans' against nefarious elites and minorities (who should all go back to their 'shit-hole countries') has been Trump's political model from day one, just as his business model as a real-estate developer was based on flim-flam and fraud. Many a MAGA grifter and opportunistic Republican has invested in that political enterprise, and it will take more than a little bit of sedition and a few dead bodies in Washington, DC, for them to start dumping their shares.

The crucial step is not just to remove Trump but to ban him from politics for life. Though this entails a permanent restriction of an individual's basic political rights, many democracies nonetheless allow for such a possibility. For example, according to the German Basic Law, those who abuse free speech and other fundamental liberties in order to undermine liberal democracy can lose their rights. This provision has never been successfully applied, though,

partly because the neo-Nazis for whom a permanent loss was considered had already been taken out of political circulation by criminal convictions.

To be sure, a permanent ban sits uneasily with a core assumption of democracy: people can change their minds. Contrary to Hillary Clinton's assertion in her infamous 2016 speech describing Trump's base as a "basket of deplorables," no one is utterly "irredeemable." If you are one of the many people who favours restoring voting rights to convicted felons, how could you justify a ban against someone like Trump? What if Trump were to repent and reinvent himself? Should we not be consistent in refusing to ban anyone permanently?

Never mind that repentance is unlikely. Trump has persistently tried to subvert the democratic process itself. That is not just any high crime or misdemeanor; nor is it comparable to any business dealings before (and during) the presidency for which he could be prosecuted. If someone refuses to play by the rules of the game (especially rules as basic as "the candidate who gets the most votes wins"), it is perfectly reasonable to eject that player.

Would Republicans support such a move? Plenty, like Senators Josh Hawley of Missouri and Ted Cruz of Texas, have bet their political fortunes on genuflecting to America's burgeoning far-right movement. But others might now be looking for a way out of the Trumpian maw. The storming of the Capitol demonstrated that you cannot have QAnon à la carte; neither Trump nor his Republican collaborators can control the forces they have unleashed. The revolution always devours its own children, and sometimes their fathers, too. If Republicans fail to de-Trumpify fully and immediately, they will learn that for themselves - but not before things get much, much worse.

*The writer, Professor of Politics at Princeton University, is a fellow at the Berlin Institute of Advanced Study.*

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Jan-Werner Mueller

**THE VIOLENT INSURRECTION AT THE US CAPITOL, INCITED BY TRUMP, REPRESENTS SOMETHING NEW AND PROFANE IN AMERICAN HISTORY**

A year ago, jurists and pundits were debating whether impeaching an American president is primarily a matter of law or of politics. It is both, of course, and there is nothing wrong with the political part. Under the US Constitution, it is politicians, not courts, who are supposed to judge whether a president has committed "high crimes and misdemeanors," and, crucially, whether a chief executive poses an ongoing threat to the republic.

With less than two weeks to go before Joe Biden replaces Donald Trump in the White House, the issue has come up again, with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi making clear that the president should be removed either by his cabinet, through the 25th Amendment, or by impeachment.

The violent insurrection at the US Capitol, incited by Trump, represents something new and profane in American history. Even though Biden will be inaugurated on January 20, the office of the presidency cannot be made safe in Trump's hands. He must be impeached (again), removed from office, and barred from holding public office ever again.

Congress has a right, but not a duty, to impeach. Sometimes, lawmakers might simply tolerate certain presidential misdeeds, having concluded that the costs of pursuing further action would outweigh the benefits. But this is not one of those times.

Just as the act of punishing a public official sends a message about a polity's moral commitments, so, too, does a failure to punish when it is warranted. By voting to acquit Trump last year, after the House of Representatives impeached him over the Ukraine scandal, Senate Republicans signaled that they were sticking with a career criminal, come what may. Trump enablers like Senator Susan Collins of Maine hoped that those proceedings would teach Trump a lesson. And so they did: Trump learned that there were no consequences for illegally coercing others into doing him favours and rigging elections on his behalf. Recall Trump's 'perfect' phone

## State's overreach

This month we will celebrate Republic Day, which is different from Independence Day. The difference may not be fully understood or appreciated. On August 15 we mark the anniversary of the day that India stopped being ruled by outsiders. We refer to this as freedom. On January 26, Republic Day, we mark the day when we put in force the laws that make the people of India sovereign. It must be noted that for some reason we mark Republic Day with a celebration of militarism. The marching in formation of armed men and their machines. We might want to ask those in parts of India which have experience of the military, such as the North East and Kashmir, what they make of this celebration or whether they consider this a proper way to mark the formation of the republic.

A republic is more than a democracy. A democracy is a system of majority rule government through elected representatives. Universal adult franchise - meaning the right to vote for these elected representatives - is only one aspect of being a republic. The other two aspects are guaranteed fundamental rights and civil liberties. These are equally important and without them you can have a democracy but not a republic. These include the right to freedom of expression, right to peaceful assembly, right to freedom of religion, right to form associations and to practice any occupation and the right to life and liberty. You could have a nation where adults can vote and elections are carried out but none of these rights and liberties exist in a meaningful way. It would be a democracy but it would not be a republic. The rights would not really be with the people but with the State, meaning the government and those who run it.

To give you an example, Indians have the right to peaceful assembly. It is actually a Fundamental Right, meaning one that enjoys a high degree of protection from encroachment. But do Indians have the right to peaceful assembly? They do not. They have the right to make an application to the police and authorities seeking permission for a peaceful protest. The State has the right to approve, reject or not respond. Similarly the right to occupation does not exist (there is a Supreme Court judgment which says the rights of the cow surpass those of a butcher), nor does the right to freedom of religion as the new laws in UP and MP and several old laws and judgments show. Freedom of expression is legally criminalised in India through laws on sedition, defamation and contempt.

Indeed, none of the rights and liberties that the Constitution saw initially as being 'fundamental' are present in the original form today. It is safe to conclude that India is a democracy but is it a republic? The reality is that today the rights are not with the citizen, they rest in the main with the State. This has happened with the passage of time. The Constitution initially gave Indians all the rights referred to above in more or less unrestricted form, as they exist in other republics like the United States. It was amendments that came later which began to cut away the freedoms to the extent that it can now be honestly said that they do not exist at all. The State appropriated the sovereignty from the people. This happened, as many will know, through footnotes to the Constitution, added as amendments to Part 3, which is the part on Fundamental Rights. The right to freedom of speech was now qualified. And the footnote reads that nothing shall prevent the State from making any law imposing reasonable restrictions on free speech which affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. What is the difference between a government that wants this power over citizens and the British Raj? The question is what can be done about this. The solution is obviously to get the State to undo the damage it has done over the years.

Article 13 says that the "State shall not make any law which takes away or abridges the rights conferred by this Part and any law made in contravention of this clause shall, to the extent of the contravention, be void." Clearly the State has committed overreach against its citizens. Our pledge on this Republic Day must be to use those parts of the Constitution that are still on our side and take back our rights and liberties lawfully from the State, which has usurped them. That would be truly worth a celebration.



Aakar Patel

**None of the rights and liberties that the Constitution saw initially as being 'fundamental' are present in the original form today**

## SPECTRUM CRICKET

# A walk down Melbourne's memory lane



SN Misra

**WHEN RAHANE WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ABOUT THE TURNAROUND OF THE INDIAN TEAM, HE FLAGGED THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER IN CRICKET**

After the drubbing in the Adelaide Test (36 all out), Virat Kohli's departure back home and Mohammed Shami's injury, stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane could not have bargained for a bumper ride than when India took guard in the historic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). India's record at the MCG has not been uplifting, with three wins out of 11 Tests played. However, India had a glorious win in Melbourne in 1981 when the mighty Australian team was all out for 83 when asked to score 121 for victory. The architect of that win was Kapil Dev who despite a debilitating hamstring injury scalped five crucial Aussie wickets for only 21 runs. The Melbourne match is also remembered for an unsavoury behaviour of Sunil Gavaskar when he threatened to walk out with Chetan Chauhan, when adjudged LBW against Dennis Lillee.

Ajinkya Rahane has been having an uncertain time in the Indian team. His role in the run out of Virat Kohli in the first Test must have rankled him no end when he took the field for the second Test. However, Rahane has a rare

distinction of winning a Test match in 2017 against the Australians by making innovative changes and bringing the deadly spinning combo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal to the fore. The Indian pacers and Ravichandran Ashwin showed rare spunk in skittling out the Australians for 195.

This time around, they had to contend with the blistering pace and inswingers of Mitchell Starc and the guile of Pat Cummins ably supplemented by the wily spinner Nathan Lyon. Josh Hazlewood was also a very tough customer to handle. Happily, Shubman Gill, the debutant, played a courageous innings. While the star of the Indian team in 2018 Cheteshwar Pujara floundered, Rahane played the innings of his life with delectable drives, square drives and pull shots which were reminiscent of Rahul Dravid, the wall of India, in 2003, when India won a match in Australia after 22 years.

In the second innings when India started, two wickets of Mayank Agarwal and Cheteshwar Pujara fell, bringing memories of 36 & 42. However, the arm chair commentators had not bargained for

Shubman Gill's exceptional skills and Ajinkya Rahane's firm resolve to get India past the winning post. When Rahane was asked to comment about the turnaround of the Indian team, he flagged the importance of character in cricket. He was indeed echoing what Rahul Dravid said in the Bradman memorial lecture in 2011. The first Indian to speak in the memorial lecture of the greatest batsman, Dravid reflected his character and sculpted each observation with care and precision like his immaculate strokes in the cricket field.

India started its journey of cricket in Australia in 1947 when Lala Amarnath led the team. Lala had famously said that "we have come not to win but to learn cricket." True to his apprehension the Indian team were bundled out in the first Test at Brisbane for 58 and 93 against the lightning pace of Ray Lindwall and swing of Keith Miller. Donald Bradman's 185 in that match was enough to swamp India's batting in both innings. However, Indian team of 1947 would be remembered for the heroic centuries scored by Vijay Hazare in both innings in Adelaide

(116 & 145), though in a losing cause. Miller wrote: "Hazare was a cricketing giant by any standards."

Cricket has always been a batsmen's paradise. The popular icons of cricket are batsmen like Bradman and Viv Richards. In the Indian context Gavaskar, Tendulkar and presently Virat Kohli have that star status. However, the quite musketeers of Indian cricket have contributed handsomely to the success of India against the heaviest of odds. Mention must be made of Gundappa Viswanath's century against West Indies in Kolkata and 98 not out in Chennai in 1975. The greatest innings of an Indian in an impossible situation against Australia was played by VVS Laxman (2001), who along with Rahul Dravid pulled off an exceptional win. Hazare planted the seed of respect in 1947 in Australia, Kapil Dev made it a sapling in 1981 and Dravid helped it bloom in 2003. Rahane is the new pied piper on Melbourne soil.

*The writer is a cricketing buff. Views are personal.*

## WISDOM CORNER

- The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.** SUN TZU
- Not engaging in ignorance is wisdom.** BODHDHARMA
- The tongue should express what is in the heart.** DAYANANDA SARASWATI

## WORDSWORTH

### Williwaw

Whether Sirocco or Santa Ana or Brickfielder, winds with names are rarely good news. The williwaw, surely the strangest named of them all, is no exception. This odd word first appears in early nineteenth-century accounts of voyages through mountainous seas and evil winds to round Cape Horn. One was by Robert FitzRoy, captain of the Beagle during his first voyage in 1829, which preceded the famous one with Charles Darwin: "The williwaws (I know no better name for the sudden gusts that come off the high land) gave us some trouble, occasionally laying us almost on our beam ends." At the end of the century another intrepid sailor traversed the same region: Here I had my first experience with the terrific squalls, called williwaws, which extended from this point on through the strait to the Pacific. They were compressed gales of wind that Boreas handed down over the hills in chunks. A full-blown williwaw will throw a ship, even without sail on, over on her beam ends; but, like other gales, they cease now and then, if only for a short time -- Sailing Alone Around The World, by Joshua Slocum, 1900. The name has since been applied to a similar phenomenon in other places, in particular the Aleutian Islands (Gore Vidal, who died in August 2012, wrote his first novel, Williwaw, after serving there as master of an Army F-5 boat during the Second World War). It's now understood that williwaws come about when air that has been cooled and made more dense on the upper reaches of a mountain roars down steep slopes to the sea. In meteorological terminology, such winds are katabatic (Greek katabatikos, from katabainein, to go down). Williwaw is said to have been named by sealers and whalers in the area of the Straits of Magellan around 1800. Nobody seems to have the slightest idea where the word came from. The only hint one can uncover is from a writer in the Gardener's Magazine in December 1839, who commented that williwaw was the usual Patagonian term for it. Presumably it was borrowed from a native language no longer known to us.

## Open ESI hospitals on Sundays

Sir, All the beneficiaries of ESI hospitals are private employees having salary less than ₹21,000. It is difficult to avail ESI hospital facility on Sundays. The number of beneficiaries is increasing day by day. Secondly, although one junior doctor remains present in the hospital to tackle the emergency needs of patients, the beneficiaries are unable to get the facility of specialists and senior doctors. The employees are facing difficulties in availing medicines for chronic diseases like diabetes, asthma, and cardiac problems as the specialist doctors are not coming on Sundays and it becomes difficult to avail leave on any working day for the employees. Although the OPD of government-run hospitals remain open and specialists come for half day, the ESI hospitals deprive patients of such facilities on Sundays. During the Covid-19 period the beneficiaries are not able to avail the services on Saturdays and Sundays as per the guidelines of the Odisha government. The hospital also remains open from 8 am to 1 pm for which the ever-increasing ESI beneficiaries are facing difficulties. The authorities are urged to keep the ESI hospitals open on Sundays in the larger interest of all beneficiaries.

Dillip Kumar Mishra, BHUBANESWAR

## It's time for a resolution now

Sir, This is in reference to the news item, "Ghar wapsi after law wapsi," published in Orissa POST on January 9. The government might have erred in the beginning by not ensuring a process of adequate consultations with stakeholders, and legislative scrutiny before passage of the three farm laws. Now, it has understood the spirit behind the movement - after its initial missteps; it has consistently reached out to farmers: it has shown flexibility in offering a set of amendments to the laws which would allay a set of apprehensions of farmers; it has even agreed to roll back on certain provisions penalising farmers for their ecologically harmful practices. Yet, the farm unions have adopted a hard stance - in other words, my way or the highway. The fact is that an elected government, with an overwhelming legislative mandate, has the right to pass laws. Opposition to laws is legitimate. But it must not happen at the cost of humanitarian consequences for fellow citizens and for themselves. While the government should continue to show flexibility and sensitivity, the ball is firmly in the court of farm unions to engage responsibly. The movement has already brought the issues concerning agriculture and the need for income security to the national centre stage. It is time for a resolution now.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

## 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. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

# BJP launches farmer outreach campaign in poll-bound Bengal

JP Nadda launches 'Ek Muthi Chawal', a programme under which he would collect rice from farmers' homes and brief them about the benefits of the new agri legislations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Katwa (WB), Jan 9:** Amid the ongoing protests over the new farm laws, BJP president JP Nadda Saturday launched a new campaign to woo the farmers of West Bengal and said the BJP government at the centre has increased the agricultural budget six-fold and the Minimum Support Price by 1.5 times.

Nadda, who launched the 'Krishak Suraksha Abhiyan' and 'Ek Muthi Chawal' (a fistful of rice) to woo farmers in the poll-bound state, said the Modi government has worked more for the farmers community than the previous governments at the centre.

He also mocked at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for agreeing to implement the PM Kisan Yojna only after realising that her party is fast losing ground among the farmers in the state.

Nadda said it is "too late" for the TMC government to agree to implement the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. "Since coming to power, the Modi govt has increased budget on agriculture by six times. In 2013-14, the budget on agriculture was only Rs 22,000 crore. Today, it stands at Rs 1,34,000 crore," Nadda said here.

Nadda said it is Prime Minister Narendra Modi who implemented the Swaminathan Committee report on MSP for crops.

"MSP according to Swaminathan Committee has been implemented only by PM Modi, increasing it nearly by 1.5 times," he said.

Later in the afternoon Nadda launched 'Ek Muthi Chawal' (a fistful of rice), a programme under which he would collect rice from farmers' homes and brief them about the benefits of the new agri legislations, as part of efforts to blunt the opposition "anti-farmer" allegations against the BJP-led central government following farmers protests in Delhi. Purba Burdwan is a major rice produc-



BJP president JP Nadda with farmers during Krishak Suraksha Sabha at Katwa in Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal, Saturday. PTI PHOTO

## It's a sham, says Trinamool

**KOLKATA:** The Trinamool Congress Saturday said that BJP's concern for farmers of the state is a sham as its leaders do not bother about those protesting within the striking distance of Delhi. Speaking to reporters, senior TMC leader and state minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said BJP leaders have time to travel across the country and "shed crocodile tears" for farmers but not pay any heed to those protesting against the farm laws. "BJP leaders are coming to Bengal and going to other places. But they don't listen to the farmers

who are protesting outside Delhi. The BJP's concern for the farmers is a pure sham," she added. Bhattacharya said the Trinamool Congress has a genuine commitment towards the small and marginal farmers. She said 92 per cent of the farmers in West Bengal are covered under Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme, besides getting Rs 5,000 per hectare. Also, the state government provides a job to the family in case of the death of a farmer, she said. "Our party have been with the farmers and will continue to be so," the minister added.

ing district and it is called the "rice bowl of West Bengal." The district, around 100 km from Kolkata also holds special significance in the state politics as it comprises of 15 assembly constituencies. Out of this majority are with the TMC at present and the saffron party wish to win them to form its government in the state. Sunil Kumar Mondal, Lok Sabha member from Burdwan Purba constituency recently switched over to the BJP from the TMC.

Nadda's address at 'Krishok Surokha Gram Sabha' in

Jagadanandpur marked the beginning of 40,000 such meetings to be held by the BJP across West Bengal before the assembly elections just months away from now.

There are 71.23 lakh farmers' families in West Bengal, 96 per cent of them small and marginal.

Ridiculing Banerjee for agreeing to implement PM Kisan Yojna only after realising that her party is fast losing ground among the farmers in the state, Nadda said once voted to power the BJP would deliver justice to the farmers of the state.

# Guv worried over law & order, meets Shah

DHANKHAR, WHO HAD BEEN AT LOGGERHEADS WITH THE TMC, ALLEGES THE STATE HAS BEEN "PLAGUED WITH RAMPANT VIOLENCE"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 9:** West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar expressed concerns about the security scenario in the state in light of the upcoming Assembly elections and raised questions over the state administration's role in maintaining law and order after meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah here Saturday.

The governor's interaction with Shah comes days after his meeting with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata. Dhankhar, who had been at loggerheads with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government ever since taking charge as the Bengal governor and criticised the Mamata Banerjee dispensation on several occasions, alleged Saturday that the state has been "plagued with rampant violence".

"The law-and-order situation and the security environment in West Bengal is under threat. Al Qaeda is spreading, illegal bomb-making is rampant. I'd like to know

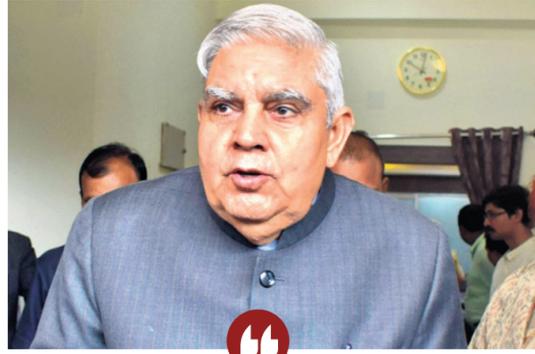
what are they (state administration) doing? The position of the director general of police in Bengal is an open secret. That's why I say we have 'political police'. Everyday I am hearing news of bomb blasts or bombs being found," he claimed in a press briefing after meeting Shah in Delhi.

The ongoing tiff between the West Bengal Governor and the ruling TMC reached a new high recently when a group of party leaders wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind demanding Dhankhar's dismissal from the post.

Saturday, the West Bengal governor said, "It's time for us to set an example by engaging in best practices so that every voter is in a position to express their franchise freely and fairly in a peaceful atmosphere."

The TMC has repeatedly targeted the BJP, saying it is controlled by "outsiders". Chief Minister Banerjee has also labelled the BJP as a "party of outsiders".

"My heart pains when ignoring constitutional provisions, a child of 'Maa Bharti' is called an out-



The law-and-order situation and the security environment in West Bengal is under threat. Al Qaeda is spreading, illegal bomb-making is rampant. I'd like to know what are they (state administration) doing? JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WB GOVERNOR

sider in West Bengal because he doesn't belong to the state. We're all the children of 'Maa Bharti' and we believe in our unity. No person living in this land can be an outsider. The year 2021 is a challenging year for West Bengal. It's an opportunity for the state to engage in makeover of the image as elections in Bengal have been plagued with rampant violence, compromising basic rights of voters and

role of bureaucracy," he said. Dhankhar, who had a meeting with Shah barely a month ago, spoke to the Union home minister for over an hour Saturday. Tagging Mamata Banerjee in a tweet, he said, "Called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah today. Had more than an hour interaction as regards various facets of state of affairs @MamataOfficial. Traversed issues of concern."

# Cong balances Gehlot, Pilot camps in state executive

The party appointed seven vice presidents, eight general secretaries and 24 secretaries to the Pradesh Congress Committee, in an apparent balancing act between the two camps led by the CM and the former deputy CM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Jan 9:** The first meeting of the newly appointed office bearers of the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee will be held Sunday.

All India Congress Committee general secretary in-charge of Rajasthan Ajay Maken will address the meeting which will be held at 3 pm, according to the party's state unit president Govind Singh Datasra.

The Congress had January 6 announced a new executive of its Rajasthan unit nearly six months after a rebellion by Sachin Pilot.

The party appointed seven vice presidents, eight general secre-

taries and 24 secretaries to the Pradesh Congress Committee, in an apparent balancing act between the two camps led by Pilot and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

The new executive, which includes a few MLAs, has some of the leaders considered loyal to former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot, who had revolted against Gehlot leading to a bitter month-long stand-off.

Gehlot had pipped Pilot in the race for chief ministership after the party's victory in the 2018 assembly polls.

The stand-off between the two in July last year had brought the Congress-led government to the brink of collapse but the party's central leadership brought about a truce with the formation of a three-member committee to look into Pilot's grievances.

# Housing societies asked to earmark 20% of total area for planting trees

West Bengal Pollution Control Board is also rolling out a scientific garbage disposal mechanism at 125 urban local bodies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Jan 9:** The West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) Saturday asked housing societies to earmark 20 per cent of their total area for planting trees to increase green cover.

WBPCB Member Secretary Rajesh Kumar during a programme of Indian Chamber of Commerce said that the housing societies must also think about organic waste disposal in a proper way.

"Housing societies are requested to earmark 20 per cent area for green cover," Kumar said in an audio message.

He also advocated setting up of solar panels in each housing soci-

ety to find out if even one per cent of electricity can be saved at their places. The WBPCB official pitched for having organic waste composters in every housing society, particularly large ones, to dispose of the organic waste generated in every household.

Kumar said that the WBPCB would also request industrialists to keep one-third of their total land left for planting trees.

Claiming that West Bengal was the pioneer in introducing auto-rickshaws run on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), a green fuel, Kumar said that the state is already operating electric buses to check vehicular pollution.

"In recent times, 80 electric buses were given to the state transport undertaking by the WBPCB from its budget," he said, adding that more buses can be purchased.

Kumar said that as part of the move to phase out over 15-year-old commercial vehicles, the WBPCB has decided to provide around Rs 1 lakh each as a subsidy to 1,000 vehicle owners.

The board is also rolling out a scientific garbage disposal mechanism at 125 urban local bodies, he said.



# Raje followers float 'new team'

For last many months, the former Rajasthan CM's distance and differences with senior BJP leaders have been a major topic of discussion in political corridors



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, Jan 9:** Shocking one and all in the BJP cadre, former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje's followers have announced 25 district presidents of a solo entity 'Team Vasundhara Raje' floated in December 2020, and made the list viral on social media.

These stunning developments were reported when a high-level meeting was called by the BJP national president JP Nadda Friday in Delhi with three senior leaders of Rajasthan - Satish Poonia, BJP state president; Gulabchand Kataria, Leader of Opposition; and Rajendra Rathore, deputy leader of opposition. Raje, however, was not invited to the meeting.

The new development has raised several eyebrows and clearly hinted about the new political quagmire emerging in Rajasthan where the 'Queen' was silently being sidelined. Eventually, her followers Friday left the party workers

shocked by releasing a list of newly appointed district presidents under the banner of 'Team Vasundhara Raje'.

The letterhead of the list carried the picture of Vasundhara's mother, Vijayaraje Scindia, and quoted her as the inspiration to promote the spirit of nationalism among masses.

These stunning developments were reported at a time when the state leaders were holding a meeting in Delhi to discuss party strategy ahead of the bypolls scheduled to be held in the three districts of the state.

As said, Raje was not a part of the meeting. Since last many months, Raje's distance and differences with senior party leaders have been a major topic of discussion in the political corridors.

In this context, BJP state president Satish Poonia said: "Vasundhara Raje's followers have raised their teams in many districts. The central leadership is

aware of this fact and we shall follow the decision taken by our party leadership in this direction."

However, Vijay Bharadwaj, convener of Vasundhara Raje Samarthak Rajasthan Manch who floated 'Team Vasundhara Raje' told IANS that the new entity was formed in December 2020 with an aim of taking the policies and projects undertaken by Raje to the people. "I am an ideal worker of BJP. We want to work together to ensure the BJP gains power in 2023 and Raje comes back as Chief Minister," he said.

Meanwhile, Poonia further said: "We are figuring out if the members are serious BJP workers. We shall compile a thorough report with all facts and then I will be in a position to speak in this matter. Right now, it is simply on social media so can't ascertain the facts. Whatever direction the central leadership gives us, we shall follow it. As of now, there is no such ritual of announcing stand-alone teams of followers in the party"

# Ajmer Dargah Deewan raises concern over radical outfits



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Jan 9:** The spiritual head of Ajmer Dargah Zainul Abedin Ali Khan Saturday expressed concern over the rise of radical organisations which project themselves as the sole representative of Muslims in the country.

Addressing the heads of various dargahs of the country in a webinar, he said Sufism upholds the highest ideals of Islam and it has always rejected the forces of extremism.

"Radical organisations like the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) are trying to project themselves as the sole representatives of Muslims in the country, and also wish to put into practice a totalitarian strand of Islam in India," Khan said.

"These organisations are trying to usurp the holy platform of important Sufi dargahs in the country in order to further their ulterior designs," he said.

The Ajmer Dargah Deewan said such forces are also trying to subvert the teachings of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti.

Islamic culture, which encourages free thought and progressive ideas, and replace it with a hard-line puritan Islamic culture alien to India," he said.

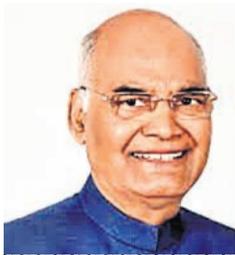
Khan also said that such organisations are utilising social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube to target mostly Muslim youths, and seek to radicalise them with tampered messages of false persecution of Muslims in India and elsewhere.

He called upon the spiritual heads of dargahs to ensure that Muslims are not affiliated with these radical organisations. "Muslim parents should educate their children well and keep a watch on their activities in this era of digital world. Fake news, doctored videos, radical viewpoints, linking religion with every minor incident and turning it into a big propaganda, are some of the disadvantages of the digital world," he noted.

The spiritual head also advocated the promotion of Sufism for peace in the country. The webinar was organised by the All India Sufi Sajjadanashin Council, wherein a four-point resolution against radical organisations and the promotion of Sufism, was also passed.

These radical organisations are trying to wipe out the liberal Islamic culture, which encourages free thought and progressive ideas, and replace it with a hard-line puritan Islamic culture alien to India

ZAINUL ABEDIN ALI KHAN AJMER DARGAH DEEWAN



It is about self-belief, leading to self-sufficiency. We intend to contribute towards mitigating disruptions in global supply chains by enhancing the availability of goods and services

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

### ALLAHABAD HC ASKS FOR COVID MGMT PLAN

The Allahabad HC asks the UP government to submit a foolproof plan by which it intends to check the coronavirus during the upcoming Magh Mela here



### of the day quote

Negotiations between the Central government and the farmers once again failed. The Centre is again requested to accept the demands of the farmers to withdraw the new agricultural laws and solve the problem soon



MAYAWATI | PRESIDENT, BJP

Now, they have come to trust this much more than earlier and there is a renewed interest in yoga and ayurveda which have always been the thrust areas for PM Narendra Modi



JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

My unsolicited advice to the Punjab CM is that you should formally join the BJP. My advice to you is please join the BJP officially. Then all cases against your relatives being probed by the ED, the CBI or corruption matters will be buried



RAGHAV CHADHA | AAP LEADER

### SHORT TAKES

#### Mega seizure at Chennai airport

Chennai: Foreign currencies equivalent to Rs1.04 crore have been seized at the airport here and one person has been arrested in this connection, a top Customs official said Saturday. Acting on inputs, passengers bound for Dubai were stopped for a check and the currencies concealed in their backpacks confiscated, the official said. The currencies included USD 74,000, Euros 25,000 and Saudi Riyals 1,50,000. One of the passengers had currencies equivalent to over Rs20 lakh in his baggage and he was arrested, a press release said.

#### AP govt against panchayat polls

Amaravati: The YS Jagan Mohan Reddy government Saturday challenged the State Election Commission's decision to conduct elections to the gram panchayats and hurriedly moved a 'House Motion petition' in the High Court seeking that the poll process be stalled. The government did not get any relief as the High Court has not immediately taken up the petition and may consider it Monday, authoritative sources said.

#### Debt-ridden man kills self

Karimnagar: Another man allegedly died by suicide in Telangana, upset over being 'harassed' by an online money lender from whom he had taken a loan and was unable to repay it, police said Saturday. With this death, the total number of suicides due to harassment by instant app-based lenders has gone up to six in the state. Pavan Kalyan Reddy (24) of Galipalli village in Rajanna Sircilla district, had allegedly taken loan from an online money lending portal and failed to repay the amount within the stipulated time, District Police Superintendent BK Rahul Hegde said.

#### 'No' case of bird flu in Karnataka

Bangalore: Karnataka Health Minister K Sudhakar Saturday said there was no case of bird flu in the state and all the tests done so far have turned negative. The minister also said that COVID-19 vaccines are expected to arrive in the state soon and would be administered as per the instructions or guidelines that will be issued by the Centre.

## PLA soldier held for crossing LAC



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 9: A Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldier was apprehended after he crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and entered the Indian territory, the Indian Army has stated.

During the early hours of January 8, a Chinese soldier was apprehended on the Indian side of the LAC in Ladakh in area South of Pangong lake, the Indian Army stated. It further stated that the PLA soldier had transgressed across the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops deployed in this area. Troops from either side are deployed along the LAC since friction erupted last year due to unprecedented mobilisation and forward concentration by Chinese troops.

"The PLA soldier is being dealt with as per laid down procedures and circumstances under which he had crossed the LAC are being investigated," the Indian Army stated. It was August 28, 2020 and August 29, 2020, Indian troops in a precautionary deployment, preempted Chinese expansionist designs and occupied heights along the southern bank of Pangong Tso. The soldier Friday was caught transgressing the same region. Last week, the Defence Ministry in its year end review had stated that PLA escalated the situation at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh by the utilisation of "unorthodox weapons and amassing large number of troops". The Ministry that Chinese made unilateral and provocative actions

### China calls for swift return of soldier

SHANGHAI: China has called for the swift return of a soldier it says is being held by Indian authorities after disappearing along the border. The China Military Online, a news portal run by the military's official PLA Daily, said Saturday the Chinese border guard went missing Friday. After the Chinese side reported the incident to India, India replied to say it had found the soldier and would hand him back once it had received instructions from more senior officers, according to the news outlet. China Military Online added that Indian authorities should "promptly transfer" the soldier back to China and "jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border area".

to change the status quo by force, in more than one area on the LAC. Thereafter, India responded to in a firm and non-escalatory way, ensuring the sanctity of claims in Eastern Ladakh. India has categorically conveyed China that any attempt to unilaterally alter the status quo at the border is unacceptable and that India is determined to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. India and China are engaged in a nine-month-long standoff at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh. Despite several levels of dialogue, there has not been any breakthrough and the deadlock continues.

## BSF hands over 6 to Pak Rangers

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, Jan 9: The Border Security Force (BSF) deployed in Punjab's Amritsar sector apprehended six Pakistani nationals, who inadvertently crossed the border and entered into Indian territory, and later handed them over to the Pakistan Rangers Saturday, the BSF said.



During questioning, it came to notice that they had crossed over to Indian territory inadvertently Friday evening. Nothing objectionable was recovered from them. The BSF approached the Pakistan Rangers and lodged a protest on the issue. On the request of the Pakistan Rangers, the apprehended Pakistani nationals were handed over to Pak Rangers at about 5.30 p.m. on humanitarian grounds, it said in a statement.

Last year also, six Pakistanis who inadvertently crossed the border were handed over to the Pakistan Rangers by the BSF, Punjab Frontier, on humanitarian grounds.

## Saffron leaders decry Twitter ban on Trump

TRUMP'S TWITTER ACCOUNT SUSPENSION DANGEROUS PRECEDENT, SAY THE BJP LEADERS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 9: BJP leaders expressed concern Saturday over the permanent suspension of US President Donald Trump's Twitter account by the social media giant, saying it sets a dangerous precedent and is a wake-up call for democracies about the threat from unregulated big tech companies.

"It is better for our democracy," BJP's youth wing president Tejaswi Surya said in a tweet. He said the suspension of Trump's account is a wake-up call for those who do not yet understand the threat to democracies from unregulated big tech companies.

Echoing similar sentiments, BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya said "deplatforming Donald Trump, a sitting US president, sets a dangerous precedent. It has less to do with his views and more to do with intolerance for a differing point." He said those who claim to champion free speech are celebrating and dubbed big tech firms as "new oligarchs". Pitching for regulating such firms, Surya said dissent is fundamental to democracy and the government welcomes it, but only constitutional authorities can decide on its reasonability. Lately, big tech companies have themselves assumed this role, he said, adding, "Time for us to regulate big tech companies."



Surya, who is also a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, said Facebook and Twitter serve as platforms for expression and they should not curtail people's will. In a statement Friday, Twitter said after a close review of recent tweets from the @realDonaldTrump account and the context around those - specifically how those are being received and interpreted on and off the social media platform - the account has been permanently suspended due to the risk of further incitement of violence. At the time of the permanent suspension, Trump had 88.7 million followers and followed 51 people.

## UP IN THE AIR



A hot-air balloon prepares for take-off during the five-day Adventure Tourism Festival, in Agartala, Saturday PTI PHOTO

## Juveniles murder 10-yr-old boy for ransom in Delhi

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 9: The body of a 10-year-old boy was found on the roof of a mosque in northeast Delhi's Khajuri Khas area. The boy went missing Thursday evening after he left for the mosque from his home. The Delhi Police later apprehended two juveniles for the murder of the child as they had intended to kidnap the boy and demand money from his parents. The body was found Friday night under piled-up construction material on the second floor of the mosque after the relatives, friends and police launched a search operation soon after the boy went missing. It took a day to trace the body. "We searched for the boy locally and then again went to trace the boy inside the mosque as we had strong suspicion that the boy went missing inside the mosque. Finally, we traced the body from the construction material piled up on the roof and informed police," said Faisal, a local of the area. The boy went to the mosque to study Thursday evening but did not return home. Later, the father of the boy got a call from the Maulvi of the mosque to inquire about the boy's whereabouts.

## NHRC notice to Guj over custodial death

The prisoner died due to negligence and torture by jail officials, and the enquiry by an Ahmedabad assistant chief metropolitan magistrate was "shady in nature" and unreliable, says the apex rights body



AGENCIES

Gandhinagar, Jan 9: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Gujarat High Court to take notice of the unnatural death of an under trial prisoner (UTP) in Sabarmati Central Jail in 2017.

the criminal case registered and progress in the matter. The NHRC had registered the case on the basis of an intimation from Central Prison Superintendent, Ahmedabad regarding the prisoner's death. Its Investigation Division informed that the victim was in the custody of Sabarmati Central Prison, Ahmedabad since May 27, 2017 after his arrest in a prohibition case.

Within two days, he fell ill and was sent to the Civil Hospital, Ahmedabad for treatment but died on the same day. The post-mortem, done by a panel of four doctors, revealed 22 ante-mortem injuries from head to toe on the person of the deceased. The forensic cause of death was given as death due to shock and haemorrhage as a result of injuries sustained. However, the ACMM, Ahmedabad concluded that the health screening report as well as inquest report revealed that no injury was present on the deceased's body. The ACMM also noted that family members did not complain of anything and based on the statements of doctors and jail officials, there was no evidence that the deceased was physically or mentally tortured during custody. However, the NHRC noted that Ashok was normal at the time of entry into the jail and died within two days, and thus it was a clear case of unnatural death in judicial custody and the state is vicariously responsible. Further, it held that the statements of the victim's family members bear no relevance as he was in jail.

holding that the prisoner died May 29, 2017 due to negligence and torture by jail officials, and that the enquiry by an Ahmedabad assistant chief metropolitan magistrate was "shady in nature" and unreliable, the apex rights body asked its registry to bring the matter to the notice of Gujarat HC's Chief Justice for taking necessary action against such judicial officers. "It is very surprising & shocking to know that though 22 ante-mortem injuries over the body of the deceased were clearly reflected in the post-mortem report, but still enquiry magistrate i.e. Ahmedabad ACMM, had stated that no injury was found to be present on the deceased. The Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court has to seriously consider the presence of such Judicial Officers in public domain," it said. The NHRC also issued a show cause notice to the state Chief Secretary, seeking as to why not an interim relief of ₹3 lakh should not be recommended to be paid to prisoner Ashok aka Lali's next of kin as his human rights were violated by jail officials. The state Director General of Police has been asked to submit, within four weeks, a detailed report in the matter along with details of

## China grudgingly concedes India's Covid vax are good

CHINA COMMUNIST PARTY'S MOUTHPIECE, THE GLOBAL TIMES, ALSO QUOTES A BBC REPORT SAYING INDIA MAKES ABOUT 60 PC OF VACCINES GLOBALLY AND MANY COUNTRIES ARE EAGERLY WAITING FOR IT TO BEGIN SHIPPING DOSES



AGENCIES

Experts suggested that India's vaccines are no less competitive than Chinese Covid-19 vaccines in both research and production capacity, considering India has the world's largest vaccine manufacturer and lower costs in labour and facilities

New Delhi, Jan 9: As demand for the India-made Covid-19 vaccines gathers momentum in foreign countries, even China appears to have grudgingly accepted its South Asian neighbours domain expertise. An article in the China Communist Party's mouthpiece, Global Times, states: "Experts suggested that India's vaccines are no less competitive than Chinese Covid-19 vaccines in both research and production capacity, considering that India has the world's largest vaccine manufacturer and lower costs in labour and facilities."

The article quotes experts as saying that India's plans to export the vaccine "could be good news for the global market given India's competitive vaccine research and production capacity". But true to form the Global Times alludes to New Delhi as allegedly having a "political and economic motive" behind the move. The report sees New Delhi as using the India-made vaccine for political brand-building and countering the international influence of Chinese vaccines. The report quotes Jiang Chunlai



Delhi as using the India-made vaccine for political brand-building and countering the international influence of Chinese vaccines. The report quotes Jiang Chunlai

from Jilin University's School of Life Sciences, who had visited Bharat Biotech, as saying: "Despite India's reputation for generic drugs, the country is not behind China in vaccine R&D." "India has the world's largest vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India that has a very mature production and supply capacity, even stronger than some Western countries. Indian vaccine manufacturers also have a much earlier cooperation with global institutes including WHO, GAVI and the Pan American Health Organization in South America (PAHO), and earned their trust decades ago," Jiang said. "They take a closer approach to Western standards in vaccine development and regulation that has also helped their exports," Jiang added.

The Global Times has also quoted a BBC report saying India makes about 60 per cent of vaccines globally and many countries are eagerly waiting for it to begin shipping doses. The report comes amid increasing acceptance of India-made vaccines in global markets. South Africa announced Thursday that the country would get 1.5 million vaccines from the Serum Institute of India (SII), with a million coming in January and the remainder the following month. Brazil is already in touch with New Delhi to place an order for India-made vaccines after being badly let down by the Chinese as reported earlier by Indanarrative.com. Various ASEAN countries including Malaysia have also placed orders for Indian vaccines.



Ours is the only democratic organisation where workers can become even Chief Minister and deputy CM, which is not the case with others....Setting aside differences, work with the sole aim of party's victory (in the polls)

K PALANISWAMI | CM, TAMIL NADU

MADHAVSINH SOLANKI BREATHES LAST AT 93

Former foreign minister and Congress veteran Madhavsinh Solanki, who had also served as Chief Minister of Gujarat, died in Gandhinagar on early Saturday morning, Congress leaders said. He was 93



of the day quote

Normally, it is about six hours of going down (in the ocean) doing some research activities and coming back. We are developing the capability in which scientists can go deep in the ocean beyond three kilometers and be there for almost 16 hours



DR HARSH VARDHAN | UNION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MINISTER

The Congress leadership in the state is in confusion as former Chief Minister Siddamaiah doesn't approve the functioning style of KPCC chief DK Shivakumar



SHOBHA KARANDLAJE | BJP LEADER & UDUPI-CHIKKAMAGALURU MP

River linking projects are important for the country. The Ken-Betwa project will benefit the dry Bundelkhand area in MP and UP. Besides irrigating thousands of hectares, the scheme will provide drinking water to 62 lakh people



GAENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | UNION JAL SHAKTI MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

New ordinance on tenancy in UP

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to promulgate a tenancy-related ordinance aimed at safeguarding the rights and interests of both the landlords and tenants and check disputes between them. The ordinance was approved in a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Friday night and is likely to receive Governor Anandiben Patel's assent soon, said an official Saturday. The ordinance was cleared by the state Cabinet.

Delhi bans live birds' imports

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Saturday announced a ban on import of live birds in the national capital and closure of Ghazipur poultry market for the next 10 days in view of bird flu scare. Noting that there is no confirmed case of avian influenza in Delhi so far, the chief minister said samples have been sent to Jalandhar laboratory. He also said that a 24-hour helpline has been set up for assistance of people.

2 UK returnees in J&K test +ve

Srinagar: Two people who recently returned to Kashmir from the UK tested positive for COVID-19, following which their samples were sent to Delhi for genome sequencing to check if they have contracted the new variant of the virus, officials said here Saturday. The travellers returned to the valley Friday and their samples tested positive for COVID-19, Director Health, Kashmir, Samir Matoo told PTI. He said the patients have been admitted at the JLNH Hospital here and their samples have been sent to Delhi for genome sequencing.

BJP leader booked

Kaushambi: A BJP leader has been booked for allegedly assaulting policemen to deter them from discharging their duty in Manjhanpur police station area, an official said Saturday. A criminal case was lodged against an office-bearer of the BJP's Kisan Morcha after he entered into a scuffle with policemen of Manjhanpur police station area to free a truck overloaded with sand and seized by police Friday night, said Kaushambi's Superintendent of Police Abhinandan.

10 infants die as fire wreaks havoc in govt-hosp in Maha

The fire, caused by a suspected electrical short-circuit, broke out around 1.45 am in the Sick and Newborn Care Unit of the Bhandara District General Hospital

AGENCIES

Bhandara (Maharashtra), Jan 9: In what is considered a shocking lapse, 10 infants were killed and another seven were saved after a fire ravaged through the children's ward of a government hospital here in the wee hours of Saturday. Shaken by the incident and the national outrage over the innocents' deaths, the Maharashtra government ordered a thorough investigation into the incident besides seeking a full-scale fire, electrical and structural audit of all hospitals in the state.

The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) demanded that the government should complete its probe within a month and slap charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder on all those found responsible for the tragedy.

The fire, caused by a suspected electrical short-circuit, broke out at around 1.45 am in the Sick and Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) of the Bhandara District General Hospital, when the mothers and other relatives of the infants were fast asleep, District Surgeon Pramod Khandate informed the media. At that time, a nurse on duty



who happened to pass by the ward noticed the smoke inside and raised an alarm as other hospital staffers rushed to the spot. At least 10 infants, including 8 females, a majority of them less than 3 months old, perished due to suffocation, while at least three died due to severe burn injuries. Another 7 infants in the 'inbound ward' were saved. Soon after dawn, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray ordered a probe, announced a compensation of Rs 5,00,000 to the families of the de-

ceased infants and other measures to contain the political fallout of the incident. "While grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic, the health administration and hospitals should not ignore safety and security issues," Thackeray said. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar also made a similar announcement and said the government would not tolerate any laxity of safety and security in hospitals. Health Minister Rajesh Tope said



- At least 10 infants, including eight females, a majority of them less than three months old, perished due to suffocation
At least three died due to severe burn injuries
Another seven infants in the 'inbound ward' were saved
CM Uddhav Thackeray orders a probe, announces Rs5,00,000 to the families of the deceased infants

that Director-Health Services would soon issue directions to ensure that the relevant full safety audits of the hospitals are in place. Although the police are probing the cause of the blaze, it is attributed to a possible short-circuit that led to an air-conditioner blast, followed by a fire with thick smoke billowing in the ward and the resultant deaths due to suffocation.

NIA court grants bail to PDP's youth wing prez

AGENCIES

Jammu, Jan 9: People's Democratic Party (PDP) Youth President, Waheed-ur-Rehman Para, was granted bail by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Jammu city Saturday.

A PDP spokesman confirmed that Waheed Para was released on bail by the NIA court.

He was arrested by the NIA in 2020 on charges of being associated with funding of terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen. He was also accused of hav-



ing close links with the dismissed Deputy Superintendent of Police, Davinder Singh and two of his terror associates, Irfan Shafi Mir and Naveed Babu. The NIA court sent Para to 30-day judicial remand December 20. His house was also raided by the Counter Intelligence Wing of J&K police on December 30 in Pulwama district. News reports said the NIA had sought details of Para's properties in Srinagar city. Para won in the District Development Council (DDC) polls held in 2020 but was not allowed to take oath as he was in judicial remand.

LA-LA LAND



Buses parked at a bus stand after the town received fresh snowfall, at Keylong in Lahaul-Spiti district, Saturday PTI PHOTO

Britain MPs, Lords express concern for Indian farmers

OVER 100 BRITAIN MPs, LORDS WRITE TO UK PM ON THE FARMERS' UNREST IN INDIA AND ASK BORIS TO TAKE UP THE ISSUE WITH PM

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, Jan 9: British Labour Party MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi has sent a letter, signed by over 100 MPs and Lords, to Prime Minister Boris Johnson on the ongoing farmers' protests in India, asking him to raise this matter with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi when they next liaise. The letter seeks to ensure that the UK Prime Minister reaffirms the importance of the right to peaceful protest internationally, has a full understanding of this important issue and asks him to raise this matter with the Indian Prime Minister, following the cancellation

of their meeting in India, planned later this month. "Immensely grateful to the 100 plus MPs and Lords who've signed cross-party letter to the Prime Minister; given huge concerns for the peaceful Indian farmers' protest. Boris Johnson must raise with the Indian PM when they liaise, expressing hopes of speedy resolution to the current deadlock," Dhesi told IANS in an message. Earlier, 36 UK MPs led by Dhesi, who has been a vocal supporter of the protesting farmers in India, wrote a letter to Commonwealth Secretary Dominic Raab in which they asked him to speak to the Indian government. The letter dated January 5, titled "Peacefully protest-



ing Indian farmers and linked global protests", says the issue has so galvanized the Indian diaspora community, especially those of a Punjabi or Sikh background, and others



who have land or links to farming in India, that tens of thousands engaged in global protests, including in towns and cities across the UK. "A cross-party letter was sent to

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab to raise this matter with his Indian counterpart and he has assured that it was raised with the Indian Foreign Minister; but he did not do so with the Indian Prime Minister during his December Delhi meeting. "We believe your January India visit has now been cancelled, but you intend to meet your Indian counterpart soon. Given the urgency of this matter, could you please confirm that you will definitely convey to the Indian Prime Minister the heart-felt anxieties of our constituents, our hopes for a speedy resolution to the current deadlock and also for the democratic human right of citizens to peacefully protest?"

NDA in a dilemma over cabinet expansion in Bihar

NITISH KUMAR MADE IT CLEAR JAN 8 THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO TALKS WITH BJP LEADERS JAN 7 REGARDING THE CABINET EXPANSION

AGENCIES

Patna, Jan 9: After six Janata Dal (United) MLAs joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Arunachal Pradesh, the alliance between the two parties may seem to be intact after leaders of both the parties met each other, but a decision on the cabinet expansion in Bihar is still pending.

However, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been holding the BJP responsible for not expanding the cabinet. The BJP leaders are talking about a cabinet expansion, but the air has still not been cleared

which does not bode well for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Bihar.

Nitish Kumar made it clear Friday that there have been no talks with BJP leaders Thursday regarding the cabinet expansion.

The Chief Minister went a step further saying, "Why didn't it take so long in the past for the cabinet expansion?"

Thursday, after BJP's Bihar unit in-charge Bhupendra Yadav and several other leaders met Nitish Kumar, it led to speculation that the cabinet expansion would take place now.



Earlier, the Chief Minister said that no proposal has come so far, holding the BJP responsible for the delay in expansion of the cabinet. The BJP has not said anything after Kumar's statement on the cabinet expansion.

However, BJP Spokesperson Prem Ranjan Patel said that the state party leadership and the BJP high command would soon talk to Nitish Kumar about the issue.

Sources said that the cabinet expansion issue is now only between the BJP and the JD(U). The ruling alliance comprises four parties, out of which the Hindustani Awam

Morcha (HAM) and the Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) have got one cabinet berth each.

Nitish Kumar was sworn in as the new Bihar Chief Minister along with 14 ministers December 16, after the NDA secured a majority in the Assembly elections. One of the ministers Mewalal Choudhary has resigned from the cabinet.

Meanwhile, NDA ally and HAM President Jitan Ram Manjhi has demanded another ministerial post. The majority figure in the Bihar Assembly is 122. At present, the NDA has 125 MLAs.



Farmers and supporters during their ongoing agitation against the new farm laws, at Singhu border in New Delhi, Saturday

Congress to gherao Raj Bhavans Jan 15

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 9: In a move to put pressure on the government over the three farm laws, the Congress Saturday said that it has decided to organise 'Kisan Adhikar Divas' in the country and will gherao the Raj Bhavans across all states January 15.

Addressing a press conference here, Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said: "Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has decided that in support of agitating farmers the party will organise Kisan Adhikar Divas in its party offices and will also gherao the Raj Bhavans in the state headquarters on January 15."

According to party leaders, the decision was taken at the virtual meeting of the party's General Secretaries and state in-charges with Sonia Gandhi earlier in the day. Surjewala said the time has come that the central government needs to understand the warning of the farmers because they have now decided to fight till their last breath if the three laws are not repealed.

Surjewala said that the party will organise protests and agitations January 15 that will include a march to the Raj Bhavans, to demand repealing of the three farm laws. He slammed the government for asking the farmers to approach the Supreme Court and said, "People of the country have



Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has decided that in support of agitating farmers the party will organise 'Kisan Adhikar Divas' in its party offices and will also gherao the Raj Bhavans in the state headquarters January 15

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

## of the day quote

Quantities of both the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccine will scale up in February. We need to make sure we're getting those doses as quickly as possible and I can assure you that we continue ongoing conversations with the companies about accelerating the schedule of delivery



We have right now, access to 300 million doses of the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine. Now the good news is that we have agreed with BioNTech-Pfizer to extend the contract



We plan to follow the protocols of our host city. I think the staff that works in large duty stations, like New York or Geneva or Vienna, will rely on national health authorities for the vaccine



## SHORT TAKES

### Greece gov't submits Bill

Athens: Greece's conservative government has submitted a Bill to parliament to extend the western limit of its territorial waters in the Ionian Sea to 12 nautical miles, following negotiations with its regional neighbours Italy and Albania. The bill, submitted late Friday, would extend its western territorial waters from six nautical miles currently. It would not affect waters in the Aegean, off Greece's southern and eastern coasts where Athens has been in dispute with its NATO ally Turkey over maritime boundaries.

### Iran holds naval parade

Tehran: Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard Saturday held a naval parade in the Persian Gulf, state TV reported, amid heightened regional tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme. The naval rally was performed near Iran's Farsi Island where Iranian forces seized two US navy boats and 10 crew members for less than one day in January 2016. Footage showed scores of vessels took part in the maneuver. Iranian state TV said hundreds of boats participated.

### Three killed by avalanche

Moscow: At least three people were killed by an avalanche that hit a ski resort in Siberia, officials said Saturday. The avalanche swept over several buildings at the Otdelnaya Mountain ski complex outside the Arctic city of Norilsk just before midnight. About 250 rescuers who combed the area for hours in a snowstorm recovered the bodies of a married couple and their 18-month-old son. The couple's second child, a 14-year-old boy, was found alive and hospitalised with serious injuries.

### Blizzard covers Spain in white

Madrid: An unusual and persistent blizzard has blanketed large parts of Spain with snow, freezing traffic and leaving thousands trapped in cars or in train stations and airports that had suspended all services as the snow kept falling Saturday. The capital, Madrid, and other parts of central Spain activated for the first time a red weather alert, the highest, and called in the military to rescue people from vehicles trapped on everything from small roads to the city's major thoroughfares.



We can and should talk about our major differences. But we must stop turning the American people against each other and this Republican Party must lead the way

NIKKI HALEY | INDIAN-AMERICAN REPUBLICAN POLITICIAN

## TOP TRUMP LAWYER SUED FOR \$1.3BN

Sidney Powell, the lawyer who spearheaded outgoing US President Donald Trump's failed attempt to overturn the 2020 presidential election result, has been sued for \$1.3 billion by the American corporation that makes voting machines



# 'Will introduce immigration Bill immediately after taking office'

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 9: US President-elect Joe Biden has said he will introduce an immigration legislation "immediately" after taking office, reversing the Trump administration's policies. Biden will take the oath of office January 20. "I will introduce an immigration bill immediately and have it sent to the appropriate committees to begin movement," he told reporters in Wilmington, Delaware Friday.

Biden was responding to a question on what his administration would do first after his inauguration January 20. He had also previously promised an immigration overhaul within 100 days of taking office.

Reversing the Trump administration's "cruel" immigration policies was Biden's one of the key election promises.

Restricting immigration has been a focus of the Trump administration since its first days when it issued the travel ban on seven Muslim-majority countries, and it has continued into Trump's final year in office as the White House uses the coronavirus pandemic as cover.

The Trump government hardened the immigration rules on those allowed to seek asylum in the US and advocated a merit-based

## REVERSING POLICIES



Reversing the Trump administration's "cruel" immigration policies was Biden's one of the key election promises

Restricting immigration has been a focus of the Trump administration since its first days when it issued the travel ban on seven Muslim-majority countries

immigration system to protect US workers. His administration also tried ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2017, but the Supreme Court blocked its attempt in June 2019.

Biden said he will also countermand the Trump administration's orders on environmental issues.

"I will in fact, countermand the executive orders that the president has in fact initiated that are contrary to, what I think, is either his authority and/or even if it is his authority, contrary to the interest of the United States on environmental issues and a whole range of other things," he said.

Biden had vowed to rejoin the Paris climate agreement on the

first day of his presidency. The US on November 4 last year formally withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, a decision originally announced by President Donald Trump in 2017.

And thirdly, Biden said he will immediately move through to the most urgent need of asking the Congress to give him the financial wherewithal to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

"To be able to move so that we have 'Operation Warp Speed' really working. Warp Speed got the vaccine to places that were delivered but did not get them from those vials into people's arms and so it is a gigantic logistical concern of how we do that," he said.

## US DEATH ROW

### Woman not competent for execution: Lawyers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Jan 9: Lawyers for the only woman on federal death row are asking a judge to halt her execution and arguing she isn't competent and can't be put to death.

Lisa Montgomery's lawyers filed a petition Friday in federal court in Indiana seeking to halt the execution, which is scheduled for Tuesday at the federal prison complex in Terre Haute, Indiana.



They argue putting Montgomery to death would violate her constitutional rights because she "has brain damage, severe mental illness, and suffered a lifetime of sexual torture."

She is one of three inmates scheduled to be executed by the Justice Department next week, just days before President-elect Joe Biden takes the oath of office. Biden opposes the death penalty, and his spokesman has said he'll work to end its use. Montgomery was convicted of killing 23-year-old Bobbie Jo Stinnett in the northwest Missouri town of Skidmore in December 2004.

# Iran bans foreign cos from testing vaccines

Iran launched human trials of its first domestic COVID-19 vaccine candidate late last month, saying it could help the country defeat the pandemic despite US sanctions that affect its ability to import vaccines

REUTERS

Dubai, Jan 9: Foreign companies will not be allowed to test COVID-19 vaccines on the Iranian people, President Hassan Rouhani said Saturday, a day after Iran's Supreme Leader banned vaccine imports from the United States and Britain.

"Foreign companies wanted to give us vaccines so they would be tested on the Iranian people. But the health ministry prevented it," Rouhani said in televised remarks, without naming the companies or giving further details.

"Our people will not be a testing device for vaccine manufacturing companies," he added. "We shall purchase safe foreign vaccines."

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's highest authority, said Friday the US and Britain were "untrustworthy" and possibly sought to spread the infection to other countries.



Khamenei repeated the accusations in a tweet that was removed by Twitter along with a message saying it violated the platform's rules against misinformation.

Iran launched human trials of its first domestic COVID-19 vaccine candidate late last month, saying it could help the country defeat the pandemic despite US sanctions that affect its ability to import vaccines.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have been on the rise since 2018, when President Donald Trump abandoned a 2015 nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions.

# Twitter bans Prez Trump permanently

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 9: US President Donald Trump has been permanently suspended from Twitter due to the "risk of further incitement of violence", the social media giant has announced, days after his supporters stormed the US Capitol and caused the deaths of four civilians and a police officer.

The unprecedented move by the California-based social media plat-

form comes after Trump tweeted that he would not attend the inauguration of his successor Joe Biden January 20.

"After close review of recent Tweets from the @realDonaldTrump account and the context around them — specifically how they are being received and interpreted on and off Twitter — we have permanently suspended the account due to the risk of further incitement of violence," Twitter said in a statement Friday.

At the time of permanent suspension, Trump had 88.7 million followers and followed 51 people. "In the context of horrific events this week, we made it clear on Wednesday that additional violations of the Twitter Rules would potentially result in this very course of action," it said.

Thousands of Trump's supporters had stormed the Capitol building on Wednesday in an unprecedented assault and clashed with police, resulting in five deaths and interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the victory of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the November 3 election.

Immediately after the incident, Twitter had temporarily suspended the account of Trump for 12 hours. Facebook has already suspended his account on Facebook and Instagram till inauguration. Early this week, YouTube removed a number of his videos from the rally he addressed to his supporters. On Friday, Trump posted two provocative tweets.



## BIDDING ADIEU



A woman waves her puppy's paw at the motorcade of US President-elect Joe Biden as he departs his home in Wilmington, Delaware

# Pak's anti-terrorism court asks police to arrest Azhar

AGENCIES

Lahore, Jan 9: UN designated global terrorist Masood Azhar, chief of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), should be arrested by January 18 in connection with a terror financing case, an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan has asked the Punjab Police, a court official said Saturday.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Gujranwala issued an arrest warrant against Azhar in the terror fi-



hearing on Friday directed the CTD to arrest JeM chief Masood Azhar by January 18 and present him in the court. In case of failure (to arrest him), the court may begin proceedings to declare him a proclaimed offender," a court official said Saturday.

Azhar is facing charges of terror financing and selling jihadi literature. Following the Palwama terror attack in February 2019, Pakistan's Punjab police had launched a crackdown on terrorism financing and

arrested six militants of the JeM in Gujranwala, some 130 kms from Lahore. Azhar is facing the trial in this case. Following the immense international pressure after the Pulwama attack, the Pakistan government arrested over 100 members of the banned militant outfits including the JeM chief's son and brother. The government also took control of the JeM, Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawah and Falahai Insaniyat Foundation properties.

## Kim calls US 'our biggest enemy'

REUTERS

Seoul, Jan 9: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for more advanced nuclear weapons and said the United States is "our biggest enemy," state media said on Saturday, presenting a stark challenge to President-elect Joe Biden just days before he takes office.

Washington's hostile policies would not change regardless of who occupies the White House but dropping those policies would be key to North Korea-US relations, Kim said, according to state news agency KCNA.

"Our foreign political activities should be focused and redirected on subduing the US, our biggest enemy and main obstacle to our innovated development," Kim said during nine hours of remarks over several days at a rare party congress in Pyongyang.

"No matter who is in power in the US, the true nature of the US and its fundamental policies towards North Korea never change," Kim said,



vowing to expand ties with "anti-imperialist, independent forces."

North Korea would not "misuse" its nuclear weapons, Kim said but the country is expanding its nuclear arsenal, including "pre-emptive" and "retaliatory" strike capabilities and warheads of varying sizes.

Kim called for developing equipment including hypersonic weapons, solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), spy satellites, and drones.

North Korea is preparing for the test and production of various new weapons, including a "multi-warhead rocket" and "supersonic gliding flight warheads for new type ballistic rockets," while research on a nuclear submarine is nearly complete, he said.

## COVID-19 PROBE

# 'China ready to work with WHO team'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing, Jan 9: China is ready to receive a World Health Organization (WHO) expert team which would conduct investigations into the origins of the novel coronavirus, a senior health official said here Saturday.

China and the WHO have reached a consensus on specific arrangements of the investigation with four video conferences, Zeng Yixin, deputy head of the National Health Commission, told a press conference. He added that Chinese experts were waiting for their WHO counterparts' arrival.

Once the WHO experts complete their procedures and finalise the schedule, Chinese experts will go to Wuhan, where the virus originated in December 2019, with them to conduct the investigation, Zeng said. He stressed that China's position



on the WHO investigation is positive, open and supportive, and the country hopes such joint efforts would help deepen the understanding of the virus and better prevent infectious diseases in the future.

Zeng's announcement came after the WHO claimed earlier this week that a team had been denied entry

to China. The world body said that two members of the team were already en route, adding that the problem was a lack of visa clearances, the BBC reported.

On Tuesday, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that he was "very

The WHO has been working to send a 10-person team of international experts to China

disappointed" that China had not yet finalised the permissions for the team's arrivals "given that two members had already begun their journeys and others were not able to travel at the last minute".

In response however, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told the BBC "there might be some misunderstanding" and "there's no need to read too much into it".

The WHO has been working to send a 10-person team of international experts to China and it was announced in December 2020 that the investigation would begin in January 2021.

# business



**Partnerships play a key role in the insurance industry, not merely for the growth and expansion of the business involved, but also for the transformation of the industry**  
**TIM HARDCASTLE** | CEO & FOUNDER, INSTANDA

## ALL-WOMEN CREW TO SET RECORD

An all-women team of Air India is set to make history when they pilot the longest non-stop commercial flight operated by any airline to India later in the week. The flight is being operated on a Boeing 777-200LR aircraft and will last more than 17 hours and may touch 16,000 kms in distance, depending on the route flown



## of the day quote

India's self-reliance campaign must not be any stretch of imagination be taken as a move 'towards isolating itself', but to be a part of the global value chain, it must improve standards, skill levels, consistency and service levels to consumers and customers



The quarter has seen further improvement in our business and financial metrics. Our overall sales and sales mix are now trending very close to our usual times except for specific customer consumption changes post Covid-19



The financial sectors' earnings are poised for recovery led by healthy traction in economic recovery and abating concerns of sharp deterioration in asset quality



## SHORT TAKES

### Govt buys 531L tonnes paddy

**New Delhi:** The Centre has procured 531.22 lakh tonnes of paddy so far during this kharif marketing season from over 70 lakh farmers at MSP, costing a little over ₹1 lakh crore, amid the ongoing protest by farmers at Delhi borders seeking repeal of three new farm laws and legal guarantee of MSP. The Kharif marketing season starts from October. "In the ongoing Kharif marketing season 2020-21, the government continues to procure Kharif 2020-21 crops at MSP from farmers as per existing MSP schemes," according to an official statement.

### Irani lauds textiles sector

**Surat:** Union Minister Smriti Irani Saturday lauded the textiles industry for its commendable work in upping production of PPE kits and masks multi-fold amid the coronavirus pandemic. Irani, who also holds the textiles portfolio in the Union Cabinet, was here to inaugurate the three-day Surat International Textile Expo (SITEX 2021). Speaking at the inaugural event of SITEX-2021, Irani commended the textiles industry for setting an example of "self-reliant India" by gearing up to produce PPE kits and masks for the country to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

### Foundation stone for Toy Cluster laid

**Bangalore:** Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Saturday laid the foundation for what is billed as the first of its kind toy manufacturing cluster in the country at Koppal, which intends to attract ₹5,000 crore investment and generate direct and indirect employment to an estimated one lakh people. The Aequus Toy Cluster is part of the state government's endeavour to establish Karnataka as a toy manufacturing hub of India.

### Rinfra completes stake sale in PKTCL

**New Delhi:** Reliance Infrastructure Saturday said it has completed the sale of its entire 74% stake in PKTCL to India Grid Trust for ₹900 crore. The proceeds will be utilised for debt reduction, and the company's dues will come down by 6 per cent to ₹13,100 crore from ₹14,000 crore.

## BUDGET 2021

# Tax sops for Covid-hit aviation sector on cards

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Jan 9:** Ahead of the Budget 2021, the government has hinted at rationalisation of various taxes in the aviation sector, which is among the hardest hit by the Covid-19 induced economic meltdown.

"We are working on a long-term plan to help the sector by rationalizing various taxes. We are looking forward to make the ecosystem smarter and more efficient to make the aviation sector sustainable," said Usha Padhee, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Addressing a webinar on "Connecting the Dots-Recovery of aviation, tourism and hospitality" on Friday, she underscored the need for the sector to be geared for any challenges and said that policy rejig will also help it in the long run, if it is hit by a similar crisis in the future.

The webinar was organised by Women in Aviation International - India Chapter.

Highlighting the success of Udan scheme, she further added: "Though



We are working on a long-term plan to help the sector by rationalizing various taxes. We are looking forward to make the ecosystem smarter and more efficient to make the aviation sector sustainable

USHA PADHEE | JOINT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

the pandemic has adversely impacted the aviation and allied sectors, yet we have managed to take steps towards recovery. We are systematically opening the air space for operations and the air bubbles have helped aviation sector to get 60 per cent capacity of domestic sector back."

She added that great solutions are borne out of crisis while delving into the fact how the industry has fast adapted to technology and transformed digitally.

"The crisis has led to digital transformation for the aviation sector. Now we have 100 per cent web check-ins and various technology

driven solutions have been adopted to offer touchless experience to passengers," she quipped.

Pre-Covid forecasts indicated that in 2036 aviation industry will provide 98 million jobs and generate \$5.7 trillion in GDP. Post Covid, the situation has reversed completely throwing the industry in a state of flux.

All commercial activities are now dependent on the recovery of aviation, tourism and hospitality industry. The webinar was also attended by Fang Liu - Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organisation. The panel also had industry leaders and experts - Dr Nareesh Trehan, Chairman and MD at Medanta, and Dr Shefali Juneja Representative of India at International Civil Aviation Organization, among others.

# 'Update doesn't change data-sharing practices'

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 9:** Facebook-owned WhatsApp Saturday said its latest update - which has received criticism from a multitude of users globally - describes business communication and does not change its data-sharing practices with the social media giant.



Earlier this week, WhatsApp had started rolling out in-app notifications to users about an update in its

Terms of Service and privacy policy regarding how it processes user data and partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the social media giant's products.

It also stated that users will have to agree to the new terms and policy by February 8, 2021, in order to continue using WhatsApp's service. This kickstarted a spate of con-

versations and memes on the internet over WhatsApp's alleged sharing of user information with Facebook. Rival platforms like Signal and Telegram are reportedly seeing a surge in downloads in the wake of the development.

Tesla chief Elon Musk had also joined in the conversation, asking people to leave WhatsApp.

# Fuel demand soars to 11-month high in Dec

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 9:** India's fuel demand rose for the fourth straight month in December as the resumption of economic activity took consumption to 11-month high, but it was about 2 per cent lower than pre-COVID levels.

The total demand for petroleum products in December 2020 fell to 18.59 million tonnes from 18.94 million tonnes a year back, according to provisional data published by the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell.

Fuel consumption, however, posted a month-on-month increase for the fourth straight month, helped by reviving transportation and business activity.

India had consumed 17.86 million tonnes in November.

The consumption in December was the highest since February 2020.

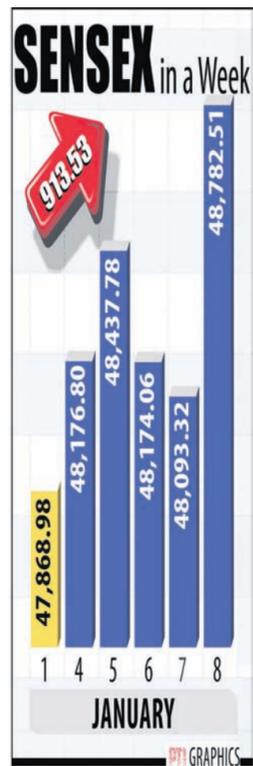
While petrol had reached pre-COVID levels in September, diesel consumption returned to normal in October. However, its demand fell again in November and now in



December. Diesel demand, which had soared 7.4 per cent year-on-year in October, dropped 6.9 per cent in November and by 2.7 per cent in December to 7.18 million tonnes. Month-on-month, the demand slightly improved from 7.04 million tonnes.

Fuel demand had snipped by 49 per cent in April after a nationwide lockdown, imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus, shut industries and took most vehicles off-road.

The 69-day nationwide lockdown was followed by local and state-level restrictions. The curbs have eased only slowly and in phases, while localised restrictions in containment zones remain.



# H&M enters Odisha market, opens its 50th store in Capital



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 9:** H&M (Hennes & Mauritz AB), the international fashion retailer known for fashion and quality at the best prices in a sustainable way, opened its 50th store in Bhubaneswar. The new showroom, spread across 15,575 sq.ft, is located at High Street Janpath and it is the first in city.

Presenting a wide selection of latest trends and timeless classics, H&M offer best products like clothes, shoes and accessories for ladies, gents and kids. The products are designed and priced in a way that caters to diverse consumer needs.

The products are priced starting from ₹299 for accessories, ₹399 for women's wear, ₹799 for denims and ₹1,299 for men's wear.

Speaking about the new store, Head (Marketing and Communications) of H&M India Amit Kothari said, "H&M is thrilled to welcome 2021 with our 50th store in Bhubaneswar: 50 stores in 5 years means a lot to us because it gives us the opportunity to serve more and more customers with fashion and quality at the best price in a sustainable way.

With all social distancing norms and safety measures in place, we look forward to welcoming cus-

tomers to Bhubaneswar as well as all our other stores in India."

H&M opened its first-ever store in 2015 in New Delhi and in a little over 5 years has expanded their retail footprint considerably. The leading retailer in India today operates 49 stores across all the leading metros as well as other key cities like Dehradun, Kochi, Bhopal, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Indore, Coimbatore, Mohali, Mysore, Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Raipur. H&M has been offering a garment collecting and recycling service across all stores which will also be available in the Bhubaneswar store.

# 'Remote working to boost hybrid workforce, gig economy'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 9:** The success of work-from-home in 2020 following lockdown due to COVID-19 will boost the gig economy and hybrid workforce this year, according to a study.

"In 2020, job losses across the experience level and the influx of fresh entrants (graduates) in the job market boosted the gig economy. This will promote diversity, inclusion and business pressure for cost optimisation and will give gig economy a major push, even though external hiring will be limited this year," according to the 2021 Talent Technology Outlook study by job site SCIEKEY.

Gig economy is a free market system in which temporary positions are common and organisations hire

independent workers for short-term commitments. Tailoring one's own working hours will also lure more women in the industry and it might even see more women in the leadership roles in the future, it added.

The study is an analysis of inputs from 100 plus C-suite and human capital leaders representing over 100 organisations through surveys, social media inputs, interviews and panel discussions.

As per the survey, 20 per cent



leaders said the recruitment will be done through external vendors and HR consultants and agencies, while 80 per cent said they will consider

internal hiring to be their first choice of hiring, it noted.

Hence, the focus on learning and development of core skills and be-

havioural and leadership competencies will be a defining factor in future, say 87 per cent of the surveyed leaders.

According to the SCIEKEY study, the workforce of future will be expected to be adaptable and possess business acumen skills.

The study showed that 67 per cent of the leaders feel that diversity in workforce is critical, both while hiring and when retaining talent.

Around 87 per cent leaders feel that critical thinking is one of the key elements they expect from their people, while 93 per cent feel that business acumen is a must-have skill of future, it added.

The remote access to this vast talent pool will immensely improve the quality of hire and fill the skill gap in 2021.

The study also showed that with

remote work, poaching talent will become easy, so it will be of utmost importance for organisations to retain their best minds.

It said that 87 per cent of the leaders said measuring employee performance in remote work is a vital challenge and 73 per cent feel that employee engagement is a major issue in terms of remote working.

Further, it says that 87 per cent of the leaders feel the necessity of skill upgradation and there will be a race to reskill or upskill, and soft skills like agility, adaptability and resilience will pave the path for future.

This sudden and massive shift to a completely different work model also led to organisations discovering the skill gaps that existed and are expected to increase further in the time to come, it added.

# AUSTRALIA TIGHTEN NOOSE

**DEFENSIVE PUJARA BATS INDIA OUT OF MATCH AS HOSTS TAKE COMMAND OF THE THIRD TEST WITH 197-RUN LEAD FINISHING DAY 3 AT 103/2 AFTER BOWLING INDIA OUT FOR 244**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sydney, Jan 9:** Cheteshwar Pujara's singular lack of intent pushed an injury-ravaged India into a deep hole as Australia tightened the noose with a substantial 197-run lead on a forgettable Saturday for the visitors in the third Test here.

Pujara's slowest Test half-century, a painstaking 50 off 176 balls, was soon followed by India being bowled out for 244 on the third day with the other batsmen feeling tremendous pressure of a dormant scoreboard.

A first-innings lead of 94 runs provided by the bowlers and some good fielding did help Australia's cause. By stumps, Steve Smith (29 batting) and Marnus Labuschagne (47 batting) gave an exhibition of how to bat on slow tracks with Australia reaching 103/2.

Labuschagne, in particular, showed how to bat positively on a dead track hitting six boundaries in 67 balls. As Shane Warne pointed out during commentary, it would be very difficult to chase any score in excess of 250 with variable bounce and the odd balls keeping low.

Pat Cummins (4/29) was brilliant on an unresponsive track with some effective short-pitched bowling and got good support from Josh Hazlewood (2/43) and Mitchell Starc



Pat Cummins celebrates after dismissing Cheteshwar Pujara, Saturday

(1/61), having set up a leg-side trap.

To make matters worse for India, there were run-outs and two batsmen - Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja - were hit on the left elbow and left thumb respectively.



Marnus Labuschagne (R) and Steve Smith guide Australia past 100 in their second essay, Saturday

While both might come into bat in the second innings, Jadeja, with a swollen left thumb, will find it difficult to even grip the ball.

Earlier, Pujara's ultra-defensive approach put tremendous pressure on his colleagues and India never quite got the momentum going as Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc continuously attacked the batsmen - first with a leg-side field and short-ball strategy and then on the corridor of uncertainty.

Pujara doesn't play the pull or hook shot well and he wasn't allowed room to either cut or drive.

While he never tried to rotate the strike, the likes of Ajinkya Rahane (22) and Rishabh Pant (36) felt the urge to break the shackles in the absence of any such intention from the other end.

The defensive approach also resulted in three run-outs including the one of Hanuma Vihari (4), who fell short while going for a quick but non-existent single.

It was then left to Ravindra Jadeja (28), who had to throw his bat around to bring the lead down to less than 100 runs, but that is of little comfort considering that India would now have to bat fourth to save the match.

A total of 84 runs from 34 overs in the first session, with lack of intent especially from Pujara, didn't help India's cause and Rahane's dismissal was purely due to the scoreboard pressure.

The Indian captain failed to get a move-on initially on a slow track where bounce became variable as the session progressed.

He did hit a cover drive and then tried to take on Nathan Lyon by lofting him for a six over long on. However, Cummins bowled one where he got extra bounce in his off-cutter, cramping Rahane for room and he was played on. The duo added 32 runs in 22.3 overs and it didn't help the team in any way.

Had KL Rahul been fit, there could have been a case of Vihari getting

## SCORECARD

**AUSTRALIA 1ST INNINGS 338**

**INDIA 1ST INNINGS**

(overnight 96/2)

Cheteshwar Pujara c Paine b Cummins 50, Ajinkya Rahane b Cummins 22, Hanuma Vihari run out 4, Rishabh Pant c Warner b Hazlewood 36, Ravindra Jadeja not out 28, Ravichandran Ashwin run out 10, Navdeep Saini c Wade b Starc 3, Jasprit Bumrah run out 0, Mohammed Siraj c Paine b Cummins 6; Extras: 9 (lb-2, nb-2, w-5); Total: 244 all out (100.4 overs).

Fall: 70/1 (Rohit), 85/2 (Gill), 117/3 (Rahane), 142/4 (Vihari), 195/5 (Pant), 195/6 (Pujara), 206/7 (Ashwin), 210/8 (Saini), 216/9 (Bumrah), 10/244 (Siraj).

Bowling: Mitchell Starc 19-7-61-1, Josh Hazlewood 21-10-43-2, Pat Cummins 21-4-10-29-4, Nathan Lyon 31-88-70-0, Marnus Labuschagne 3-0-11-0, Cameron Green 5-1-11-0.

**AUSTRALIA 2ND INNINGS**

David Warner lbw b Ashwin 13, Will Pucovski c sub (Saha) b Siraj 10, Marnus Labuschagne batting 47, Steve Smith batting 29;

Extras: 4 (lb-1, nb-3); Total: 103/2 (29 overs).

Fall: 1/16 (Pucovski), 2/35 (Warner).

Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 8-1-26-0, Mohammed Siraj 8-2-20-1, Navdeep Saini 7-1-28-0, Ravichandran Ashwin 6-0-28-1.

## Jadeja out of 4th Test



Ravindra Jadeja and Rishabh Pant (bottom) get some medical attention after suffering injuries at SCG, Saturday

**SYDNEY:** Depleted India's injury woes worsened Saturday with senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja sustaining a left thumb dislocation and fracture which is likely to rule him out of the final Test in Brisbane, starting January 15.

However, there is some good news for India as wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant's elbow injury is not serious and he will probably be available when India bat to save the Test match.

Both players underwent scans after being hit by short balls from Australian pacers on third day of the Test match.

"Ravindra Jadeja has suffered a dislocation and fracture on his left thumb. It will be very difficult for him to wear those gloves and bat," a senior BCCI source told PTI. "In any case, he will be out of action for at least two to three weeks which rules him out of the final Test.



Pant will be able to bat as his injury isn't that serious."

The visitors' first jolt came when Pant sustained an elbow injury after being hit by a Pat Cummins delivery. Reserve wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha replaced Pant as per a recent amendment in the ICC playing conditions.

Coming into the Sydney Test, India had lost Ishant Sharma (before series started), Mohammed Shami (forearm), Umesh Yadav (calf muscle) and KL Rahul (wrist) to various injuries. Virat Kohli is on a paternity leave.

## Bumrah, Siraj allegedly abused racially

**SYDNEY:** The BCCI Saturday lodged a formal complaint with ICC match referee David Boon after Indian team players, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj, were allegedly racially abused by a drunk spectator here during the third day of third Test against Australia. According to BCCI sources, Siraj was allegedly referred to as a 'monkey' by a drunk spectator in one of stands at the Sydney Cricket Ground, reliving the infamous Monkeygate episode of the Indian team's tour of Australia in 2007-08. "BCCI lodged a formal complaint with ICC match referee David Boon about two of their players Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj being abused by a drunk spectator," a Cricket Board source told PTI. It is learnt that a long discussion was held between the senior players of the visiting contingent, including captain Ajinkya Rahane, the umpires and security officers at the end of the day's play. The abuses were directed at the Indian duo while they were fielding during the Australian second innings.

## POST DAY 3 PLAY REACTIONS

### CHETESHWAR PUJARA

**On his innings:** I was batting well and got a good ball. I just have to accept it. I couldn't have done anything better than what I was doing. I feel I just have to bat the way, I know.

**On Cummins:** He bowls unplayable deliveries. I felt that was the best ball of this series. I don't think I could have done anything about that ball which kicked from back of length. I had to play that ball as there was extra bounce. When it's not your day, the margin of error is very little.

**On not playing hook/pull:** They bowled good line and lengths. They had fair idea of this pitch. I think we should give credit to the way they bowled. They didn't give too many loose balls.

**Inexperienced Indian bowling attack:** If you look at our fast bowling line-up, they are slightly inexperienced but they are improving day by day, they will get better. It's a good opportunity for them to learn and I am sure we have good bunch of fast bowlers who can learn from best and get better as they play more games.

**Turning point:** If you look at the way our innings was progressing, we were in trouble only when

Rishabh got out. Till then we were in a comfortable position. We were 180/4, and we were doing well. Things turned around when Rishabh got out and then I got out. We didn't score many after that. Losing Rishabh was a turnaround. If we had a partnership going, we would have certainly put a decent total on the board.

**Lossing Jadeja:** To be honest, it does affect as we are only left with four bowlers. It puts little extra pressure on other bowlers to come in and put extra overs. It's never easy to lose a bowler and someone like Ravindra who got four wickets in first innings and can keep bowling from one end. Jadeja can land the ball on same spot and puts pressure on the batsman, he bowls many dot balls. He is always valuable not just as a bowler but also a fielder. It's a kind of blow for us but we will comeback strongly.

### PAT CUMMINS

**Tactic against Pujara:** Today I got a bit of assistance from the pitch. But he (Pujara) is someone you know you are going to have to bowl a lot at. We got our head around that this series, for him to score runs, we are going to make it as hard as possible, and whether he bats for 200-300

balls, we would just try and bowl good ball after good ball, challenge both sides of his bat, and fortunately, so far it has worked.

**Expects India to bounce back:** I think, at the start of the day, I was kind of hoping that we wouldn't end the day still having to bowl, so to be having 200 lead with eight wickets in hand on a wicket that is deteriorating pretty quickly, great result. I think they are a good side, I am sure they are going to bounce back but in terms of getting the bowlers back out there for another day, they have now bowled for three days in a row, those kinds of things do add up.

**Aiming for big lead:** The big thing is to keep that lead get up over 300-odd and hopefully the wicket keeps deteriorating and make that a really tough total to score on day four and five.

**On his performance:** I'd say it's right up there. Rhythm feels really good. I would say I have got pretty good control on not only where the ball is landing but I guess the seam movement as well. Hopefully it continues. No doubt having come into this series quite fresh as well, not having played Tests since the end of last summer, that's a massive help and even three-Test legs still feel really fresh, so don't discount that either.



Cheteshwar Pujara has been criticised for his ultra-defensive innings

**I DON'T THINK IT WAS THE RIGHT APPROACH (BY PUJARA), I THINK HE NEEDED TO BE A BIT MORE PROACTIVE WITH HIS SCORING RATE BECAUSE I FELT IT WAS PUTTING TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON HIS BATTING PARTNERS**

**RICKY PONTING**



## Steinmann goal lifts East Bengal

AGENCIES

**Goa, Jan 9:** SC East Bengal picked up three crucial points as they edged out Bengaluru FC in their Indian Super League (ISL) encounter at the Fatorda Stadium, Saturday.

Matti Steinmann scored the only goal of the night in the 20th minute to seal the win for the Red and Golds. The Kolkata giants ended the first phase of the league with 10 points from as many games and remained on the 10th position in the 11-team league table above bottom-placed Odisha FC.

Bengaluru dominated the initial minutes of the match and almost grabbed the lead in the 13th minute. Parag Shrivastava showed off some good skills inside the box as he dribbled past Narayan Das and squared the ball. Danny Fox intercepted but the ball hit Juanan and almost went in. Lucky for Debjit Majumder as it hit the side net. It was a narrow escape for East Bengal.



Matti Steinmann (C) celebrates his goal against Bengaluru FC with his teammates during their ISL match, Saturday

Couple of minutes later, Cleiton Silva missed a sitter. Rahul Bheke sent in a long throw-in which reached Cleiton inside the box. The Brazilian attempted a header but the ball dropped in front of the goal and then dropped on the roof of the goal.

However, Bengaluru weren't that lucky as East Bengal capitalised on their chance to went up seven minutes later. Ankit Mukherjee won the ball on the right side of the box after Ajith Kumar failed to intercept a long ball.

Ankit's first cross was blocked by a Bengaluru player but he managed to send a cross in his second attempt to Narayan who in turn squared it to Steinmann and the German flicked the ball into the back of the net with the outstep of his right foot.

In spite of creating several chances, Bengaluru couldn't find the equaliser as SCEB defense held their fort to deny their oppositions even a single point.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bambolim, Jan 9:** Woefully out of sorts this season, former champions Chennaiyin FC would look to revive their fortunes when they face bottom-placed Odisha FC in an Indian Super League (ISL) match here, Sunday.

Stuart Baxter's team will be hoping to pick up from the 4-2 win over Kerala Blasters in their last match Thursday. They may still be rooted to the bottom of the table, but a win over Chennaiyin will take them to within two points of their opponents.

They also seem to have found an unlikely creative force in Jerry Mawihmingthanga, who now leads the ISL charts for assists along with Hugo Boumous.

"It's important to the degree that we needed to get those three points to give the players the belief and the confidence to continue the roll around," said Baxter.

"The players did a fantastic job in retaining their confidence and



Head coach Stuart Baxter during Odisha FC's training session ahead of their match against Chennaiyin FC, Sunday

their belief despite the results being against us sometimes quite unlikely. But, we do need that to gain a little bit of momentum and now hopefully, we can kick on."

On the other hand, things are not looking pretty for Chennaiyin with just one win in their last eight

games. They are at the eighth spot with 10 points from nine games with two wins, four draws and three draws.

To make matters worse for the Super Machans, captain Rafael Crivellaro has been ruled out for the season due to an ankle injury.