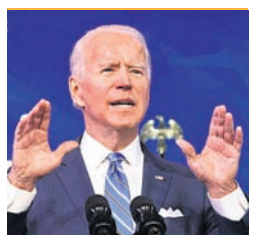




GOING PLACES

India-born Hollywood star Frieda Pinto will play British WW II spy Noor Inayat Khan in an upcoming TV series

LEISURE P2



BIDEN'S 100 DAY TARGET

Joe Biden targets inoculating 100 mn Americans with Covid vax in the first 100 days of his administration

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA ON BACKFOOT

Rohit Sharma's indiscreet shot selection pegs India back after rookie bowling attack restricts Aus to 369 on a rain-curtailed day

SPORTS P12

1.91L beneficiaries get first jobs

4 HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN NEW DELHI EXPERIENCE ADVERSE AFTER-EFFECTS, SOURCES SAY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 16: Over 1.91 lakh total beneficiaries including healthcare and sanitation workers at the frontline of India's Covid-19 battle got their first jobs Saturday as PM Modi rolled out the world's largest vaccination drive against the pandemic.

India is home to the world's largest vaccine makers and has one of the biggest immunisation programs. But there is no playbook for the enormity of the current challenge.

Indian authorities hope to give shots to 300 million people, roughly the population of the US and several times more than its existing program that targets 26 million infants. The recipients include 30 million doctors, nurses and other frontline workers, to be followed by 270 million people who are either over 50 years old or have illnesses that make them vulnerable to Covid.

For workers who have pulled India's battered healthcare system through the pandemic, the shots offered confidence that life can start returning to normal. Many burst with pride. "I am excited that I am among the first to get the vaccine," Gita Devi, a nurse, said as she lifted her left sleeve to receive the shot.

"I am happy to get an India-made vaccine and that we don't have to depend on others for it," said Devi, who has treated patients throughout the pandemic in a hospital in Lucknow. The first dose was administered to a sanitation worker at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi kickstarted the campaign with a nationally televised speech.



A doctor shows a Covid-19 vaccine vial at a government hospital in Jammu

- Health officials haven't specified what percentage of India's nearly 1.4 billion people will be targeted by the campaign
- But experts say it will almost certainly be the largest such drive globally
- The sheer scale has its obstacles; for instance, India plans to rely heavily on a digital platform to track the shipment and delivery of vaccines
- But public health experts point out that the internet remains patchy in large parts of the country, with some remote villages entirely unconnected

"We are launching the world's biggest vaccination drive and it shows the world our capability," Modi said. He implored citizens to keep their guard up and not to believe any "rumors about the safety of the vaccines."

It was not clear whether Modi, 70, had taken the vaccine himself like other world leaders as an example of the shot's safety. His government has said politicians will not be considered priority groups in the first phase of the rollout.

SANITATION WORKER IN CAPITAL HOSPITAL GETS 1ST SHOT OF VAX

BHUBANESWAR: The Covid-19 vaccination drive began at 161 sites spread across 30 districts of the state Saturday.

Biranchi Naik, 51, a sweeper in Capital Hospital of Bhubaneswar became the first person to get the Covid vaccine Covaxin Saturday.

After taking the first Covid-19 vaccine jab, director of Capital Hospital Laxmidhar Sahu appealed to people to get vaccinated without fear and apprehension.

"I have taken the Covid-19 vaccine. As you can see I am completely fine and healthy after the observation period. So, I urge all not to believe in rumours and fake news and come forward for vaccination," said Sahu.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra informed that a total of 16,100 healthcare workers would receive the Covid-19 vaccine on the first day.

"A Class IV staff of Capital Hospital took the first jab followed by the director of the facility and another doctor. This is a big day for us in the fight against Covid-19," said Mohapatra. He said 1.92 lakh healthcare workers would receive vaccine within a week using the available vials in the first phase. The state has received 4.08 lakh doses of



51-year-old Biranchi Naik, a sweeper in Capital Hospital of Bhubaneswar, becomes the first person to get the Covid vaccine Covaxin in Odisha, Saturday

I'm happy and excited that I received the much-awaited vaccine. I am feeling well

BIRANCHI NAIK | SANITATION WORKER, CAPITAL HOSPITAL, BHUBANESWAR

Covishield vaccine and 20,000 doses of Covaxin vaccine in the first phase.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik interacted with beneficiaries at a particular site in Berhampur, Sundargarh and Bhubaneswar.

In the first phase, 9,000 health workers will be administered vaccine under the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) area.

After getting the first dose, Umakant Satpathy, additional director of Directorate of Medical Education and Training (DMET), appealed all to take the vaccine so that precious lives can be saved.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said this is a historic day for the citizens of India.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, vaccine vials were received 2 days ago. I just kept them in sunlight to disinfect!

Central agencies not providing docus to Odisha, Chhattisgarh

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, Jan 16: Non-cooperation of the Central agencies in providing relevant documents to both Odisha and Chhattisgarh has been delaying the Mahanadi river water dispute between the two riparian states.

According to official sources, the Central agencies have been maintaining an inactive approach towards the dispute. The state of Odisha sought several documents related to Mahanadi basin from Central agencies in August 2020 in order to settle the long pending dispute. The Mahanadi tribunal had also asked the Central agencies to furnish the documents required by both the riparian states. However, the officials said, the Central agencies have not released the requested documents. The Odisha government had sought copies of Technical Advisory Committee's notes on over 23 projects cleared in Mahanadi basin since 1950 namely Mayana Tank, Gej Tank, Dhara Tank and Saroda Tank among others. The state government also sought detailed project reports of several projects cleared by the Central Water Commission in Mahanadi basin. The state government has requested the Ministry of Jal Shakti



MAHANADI WATER DISPUTE

to provide it letter of submissions and summary of recommendations made by advisory committee in 1948 for the Hirakud dam. It also demanded terms of reference, report of advisory committee constituted in 1952 on the Hirakud dam project. The state government also requested all Public Accounts Committee Reports on the Hirakud dam except the 11th report. It also pleaded for the project wise detail utilisation in Mahanadi basin.

Further, Odisha government sought environment clearance reports issued to around 35 projects in Mahanadi basin from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Similarly, the state of Chhattisgarh has requested geospatial data from the Indian

Meteorological department.

The statutory tenure of the Mahanadi tribunal even after extension will end in 2023. The tribunal was constituted in 2018. The technical and legal teams of both states are aggrieved with the non-cooperation of the Central agencies, said an official adding that the lack of cooperation from Central agencies would lead to inordinate delay.

Significantly, the three-judge bench of Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal headed by Supreme Court Justice AM Khanwilkar Saturday asked Odisha and Chhattisgarh to submit a consolidated list of documents they need from the Central agencies by Monday. The tribunal had also observed that common format will be finalised in two weeks. The bench will hear the matter February 6.

"It's been almost six months now, the Central agencies haven't provided the documents sought by both the states," an official said requesting anonymity

Undertrial prisoner dies in Jharpada jail



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: An undertrial prisoner in Jharpada special jail here died due to severe cardiac arrest Saturday morning. The deceased, identified as Ravi Dulla, was a resident of Kolkata in West Bengal.

According to sources, Dulla was arrested for his alleged involvement in the Nayagarh armoury loot incident in 2008. He spent more than a decade as an under-trial prisoner in Jharpada special jail here.

He suffered a serious cardiac arrest while filling up drinking water Saturday morning. The authorities immediately rushed him to the Capital hospital where the doctors declared him brought-dead.

US state capitals on edge for armed protests

The perception that the Jan 6 insurrection was a success could embolden domestic extremists motivated by anti-govt, racial and partisan grievances, spurring them on to further violence

AGENCIES

New York, Jan 16: US law enforcement officials are gearing up for pro-Trump marches in all 50 state capitals this weekend, erecting barriers and calling in their National Guards to prevent the kind of violent attack that rattled the nation January 6.

The FBI has warned police agencies of possible armed protests at all 50 state capitals starting January 16 through President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration January 20, fuelled by supporters of President Donald Trump who believe his false claims of elec-



toral fraud. Michigan, Virginia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Washington are among the states that have activated their National Guards to strengthen security, while Texas took the step of closing its Capitol from

Saturday through Inauguration Day. Steve McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said in a statement late Friday that intelligence indicated "violent extremists" may seek to exploit planned armed protests in Austin to "conduct criminal acts."

The scramble follows the deadly January 6 attack on the US Capitol in Washington by a mix of extremists and Trump supporters. Law enforcement officials have trained much of their focus Sunday, when the anti-government "boogaloo" movement has flagged plans to hold rallies in all 50 states. In Michigan, a fence was erected

around the Capitol building in Lansing and troops were mobilised from across the state to bolster security. The legislature nevertheless cancelled meetings next week, citing concern over credible threats.

"We are prepared for the worst but we remain hopeful that those who choose to demonstrate at our Capitol do so peacefully," Michigan State Police Director Joe Gasper told a news conference Friday. The Joint Intelligence Bulletin further warned that "false narratives" about electoral fraud would serve as an ongoing catalyst for extremist groups.

Post vaccine shots, 23 elderly die in Norway

Norway health authorities issue warning

AGENCIES

Oslo, Jan 16: Norway said Covid-19 vaccines may be too risky for the very old and terminally ill, the most cautious statement yet from a European health authority as countries assess the real-world side effects of the first shots to gain approval. Norwegian officials said 23 people had died in the country a short time after receiving their first dose of the vaccine. Of those deaths, 13 have been autopsied, with the results suggesting that common side effects may have contributed to severe reactions in frail, elderly people, according to the Norwegian Medicines Agency.

Norway authority says that it does not mean younger, healthier people should avoid being vaccinated. But it's an early indication of what to watch as countries begin to issue



- For those with the most severe frailty, even relatively mild vaccine side effects can have serious consequences
- For those who have a very short remaining lifespan anyway, the benefit of the vaccine may be marginal or irrelevant

safety monitoring reports on the vaccines. Emer Cooke, the new head of the European Medicines Agency, has said tracking the safety of Covid vaccines, especially those relying on novel technologies such as messenger RNA, would be one of the biggest challenges once shots are rolled out widely. Pfizer and BioNTech are working with the Norwegian regulator to investigate the deaths.

Farmers' union for new members in panel on agri laws



Farmers have langar during their ongoing protest against the new farm laws, at Singhu Border in New Delhi, Saturday

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 16: A farmers' union requested the SC Saturday to remove the remaining three members of the committee it had set up to resolve the impasse over the three contentious farm laws. The union asked to select people who can do the job "on the basis of mutual harmony."

The Bhartiya Kisan Union Lokshakti said the principle of natural justice is going to be violated as those appointed to the four-member committee "have already supported these laws."

In an affidavit, it also sought dismissal of a plea of the Central government, filed through the Delhi Police, seeking an injunction against the proposed tractor march or any other kind of protest by farmers which seeks to disrupt the gathering and celebrations of Republic Day January 26.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde had agreed to hear January 18 the Centre's application against the proposed tractor march.

The Bhartiya Kisan Union Lokshakti is one of the 40-odd farmer unions spearheading the agitation on various border points of Delhi for about 50 days now, demanding repeal of the farm laws.

In an "extraordinary" interim order, the top court had stayed the implementation of the new farm laws till further orders and had constituted the four-member committee to listen to the grievances and make recommendations to resolve the impasse.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	30.0°C	29.5°C	
MIN	16°C	15°C	
Humidity	94%	98%	Fog or mist in the morning
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



FELT BULLIED AFTER TITANIC SUCCESS: KATE WINSLET

English actress Kate Winslet says she felt bullied after the global success of her 1997 release *Titanic*, because the film brought her personal life into scrutiny. Winslet became a household name at the age of 21 after the success of the James Cameron film that cast her as Leonardo DiCaprio's romantic lead.

AT CORE I AM ANYTHING BUT POLITICAL: DREW BARRYMORE

Actress Drew Barrymore feels she is finding her voice on Instagram, but only regarding things that are not related to politics. "At my very core belief I am anything but political," the *Charlie's Angels* actress said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will be very active today. Your activities will result in progress and success. However in the evening you will feel the need for some solitude. Pay heed to your moods, and get into a solitary corner to be alone. Ganesh says it's okay to confide your problems to your dog.

TAURUS
This is a great day for students and scholars, declares Ganesh. If you are pursuing higher studies or professional courses you will feel pleased and confident about the progress you are making. Do not, however, expect the atmosphere, or the arrangements to be the way you expect them to be. Be prepared for ordinary sub standard studying conditions. Stay cool. Be practical and take things in your stride.

GEMINI
A hectic and challenging day awaits you. You will be busy with your family members and children, tending to their needs. New deadlines at work may put pressure on you. Love and romance will give you the fuel needed to keep going, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Ganesh counsels you to persevere thoughtfully before signing any document. As it is a day of financial loss, handle middlemen and agents deftly. New tempting offers are seen on the job front. So you may accept a new job.

LEO
You will be serious about your work today. You will organise your schedule for the day in the morning itself. You will take up tasks that are dear to you and will analyse the results of your labours in the past. In the later half of the day, you will be able to have good relations with everyone who comes into contact with you. You will look back upon the day with a feeling of satisfaction, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today it will be family responsibilities that will dominate the day. Juniors will offer you a lot of help, but you must remember that what you seek is valuable and that it will demand a lot of effort from you. Ganesh advises you to be careful of people in general.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that you shall be attracted to the opposite sex today. Today during the afternoon, you will meet people who share the same ideas and thoughts as you do and you will be able to share your feelings with them. You will be interested in knowing new things on various topics. Your increased knowledge will likely lead you on to greater success.

SCORPIO
Your far sightedness will make you realise the importance of financial security. Thus, you are in a mood to make long term investments. Social recognition awaits you in the evening. Ganesh feels that people look up to you as a wise person and thus seek high values from you.

SAGITTARIUS
You may feel as if you are caught in a rat race and for you it has become important of survive it. Though it is challenging enough, you are excited to get a new mission in life. Take a break in the evening and enjoy it with family and friends, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You'll feel trapped and may feel as if everyone is trying to bog you down by hook or crook. Others may bully you and this may shatter your confidence. Do not worry though, as your luck is guarding you, assures Ganesh. Even if others are mean to you, their behaviour will not mar your health or image. You will not surrender to the adversities, as your talents will direct you towards a safer place.

AQUARIUS
Financially, you are on a stable ground today, so make the most of it. You will give a tough fight to your competitors, and leave them far behind in the race as not many can beat you in your own game. Beware of those green-eyed people around, alerts Ganesh, as they are waiting for you to make a mistake and get off the track.

PISCES
Other people will have high expectations from you. You will be required to co-operate with others and give your co-workers more of your time than is their due. However, your co-workers will also reciprocate in equal measure when the need arises. You will be determined to complete all your projects on time.

IFFI-2021 kicks off with 'restrictions'

THE FESTIVAL WILL CELEBRATE THE BIRTH CENTENARY OF LEGENDARY FILMMAKER AND ACADEMY HONORARY AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR SATYAJIT RAY

PANAJI: India's biggest and oldest international film event, the 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) was inaugurated Saturday in Goa.

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar, who along with south actor Sudeep opened the festival, praised the resilience of mankind to have come up with a vaccine for Covid-19 just a year after positive cases were reported in January 2020.

He also pitched for private participation in the next edition of the event. "IFFI Goa is organised each time by the Government of India and the Goa government. Why? There should be participation of the film industry as well as other industries," Javadekar said at the inaugural function of the festival.

This year's edition of IFFI is being organised in a hybrid format, in wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has forced the organisers to



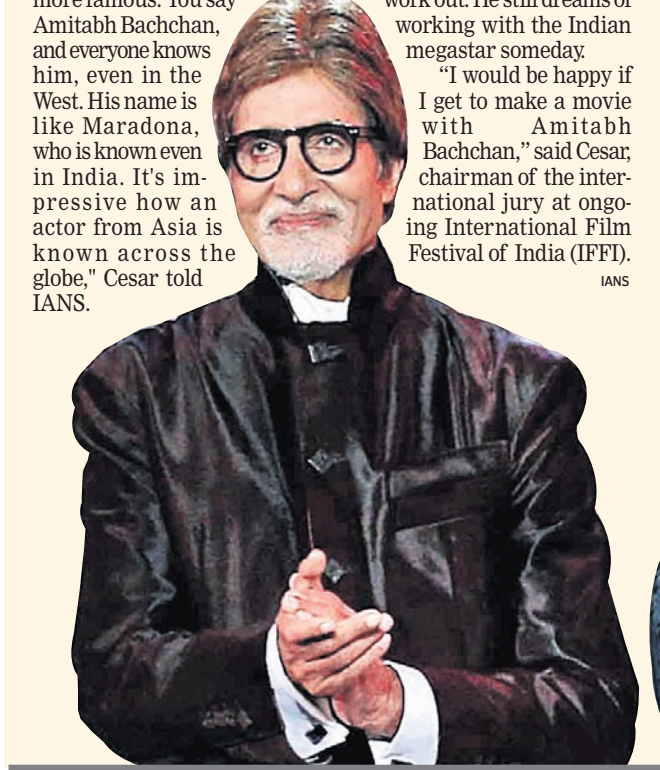
Amitabh known in West just like Maradona in India: Pablo Cesar

NEW DELHI: Argentine filmmaker Pablo Cesar loves returning to India, and enjoys Indian commercial films.

"They have a unique style. In commercial cinema, it's mostly the actors who are more famous. You say Amitabh Bachchan, and everyone knows him, even in the West. His name is like Maradona, who is known even in India. It's impressive how an actor from Asia is known across the globe," Cesar told IANS.

Cesar, in fact, had thought of casting Big B in his film *Thinking Of Him*, which explored Indian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's relationship with Argentine writer Victoria Ocampo, but it didn't work out. He still dreams of working with the Indian megastar someday.

"I would be happy if I get to make a movie with Amitabh Bachchan," said Cesar, chairman of the international jury at ongoing International Film Festival of India (IFFI).



limit attendance, both at the opening and closing events, as well as during the screening of the 224 films from nearly sixty countries. The festival has been curtailed to a duration of eight days this year.

Renowned film makers namely Pablo Cesar



(Argentina), Prasanna Vithanage (Sri Lanka), Abu Bakr Shawky (Austria), Priyadarshan (India) and Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh) are members of the international jury who are tasked with selecting the best films in the international competition section for IFFI's prestigious awards.

"The festival will premier Danish filmmaker Thomas Vinterberg's *Another Round* as the opening film. The historical drama *Wife of a Spy* by Kiyoshi Kurosawa will bring the 51st IFFI to a close, a statement issued by the organisers said.

"A selection of 23 feature and 20 non-feature films will be showcased in the Indian Panorama section of the 51st IFFI," the statement also said.

The festival will celebrate the 100 years of film icon Satyajit Ray.

Pinto to play Noor Inayat Khan in new spy thriller

LONDON: Hollywood star Frieda Pinto will take on the role of British World War II spy Noor Inayat Khan in an upcoming television thriller.

The six-part series, which will get into production later this year, hails from writer Olivia Hetreed



and Red Room Films.

It is based on the biography *Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan* (2006) by author Shrabani Basu and will be directed by London-based filmmaker Anand Tucker.

The screenplay, which will chronicle the incredible story of the young Sufi mystic-turned-war-heroine, has been devised as a spy thriller.

Khan, whose Indian heritage is traced back to the 18th century Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan, was born in Moscow in 1914 to Indian father Hazrat Inayat Khan and American mother Ora Ray Baker.

"She was a fierce and amazing woman - the most unlikely heroine of World War II," Pinto, who is also an executive producer on the project, said.

Basu, also the founding-chair of the Noor Inayat Khan Memorial Trust, said she was happy that Khan's inspiring story will be reaching an even bigger audience with the series.



Nushratt's sultry Saturday vibes

MUMBAI: Nushratt Bharuccha spent Saturday sending out sultry vibes to fans on social media. The actress posted pictures on Instagram Stories where she aces the astyle game.

In one image, she poses in a short two piece outfit paired with heels and messy hair. To add an element of mystique to oomph, she doesn't show her face in the image.

"Work in Progress," she wrote on the picture.

In another picture, which seems to be a moment from a re-

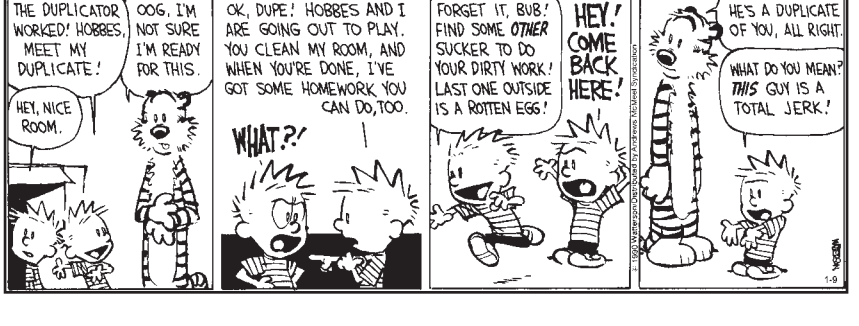
cent photoshoot, she flaunts her toned legs while posing on a chair.

"Just a casual Saturday," she wrote. The actress was seen in *Chhalaang*. She has Omung Kumar's *Janhit Mein Jaari* and *Hurdang* in the pipeline, and also stars in the horror film *Chhorii*.

PEANUTS



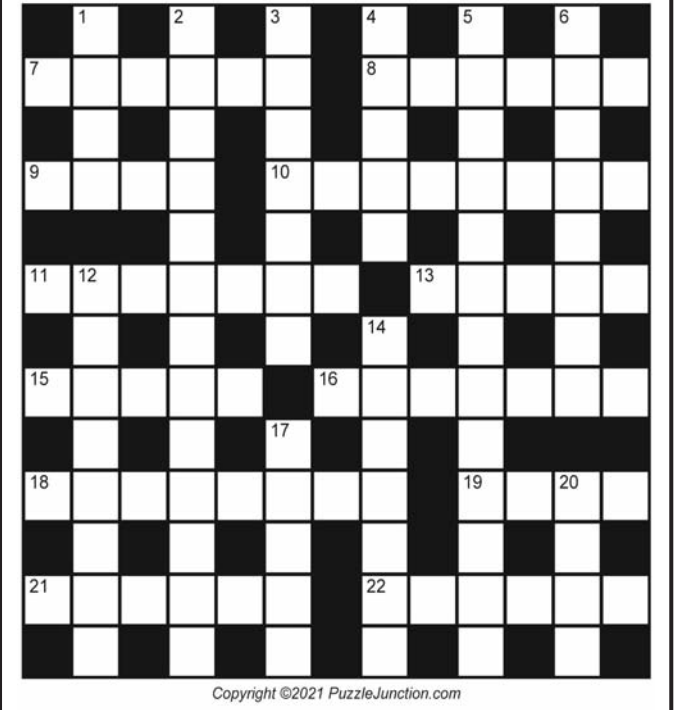
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



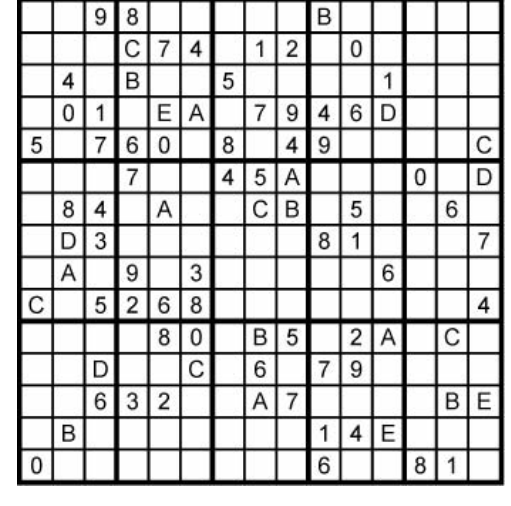
FUN post CROSSWORD



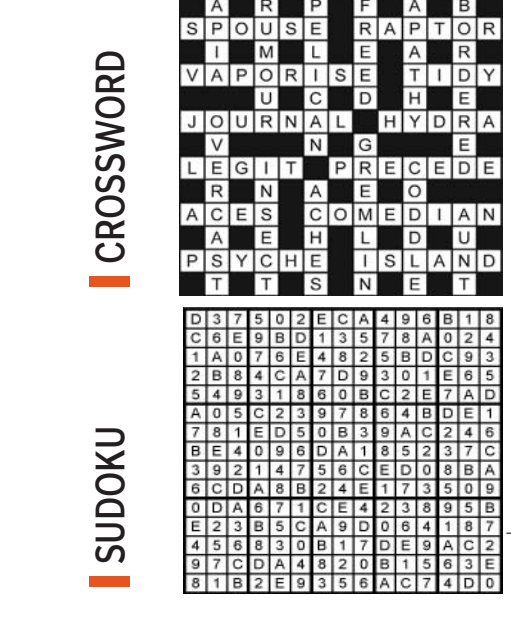
- Across**
7 Energy
8 Ottoman
9 Dyke
10 Reprimand
11 Abbreviate
13 Stiff-upper-lip type
15 Ensigns
16 Wander aimlessly
18 Train, to a child (4-4)
- Down**
19 Narrow street
21 Twitches
22 Dismiss
1 Fired clay used for roofing
2 Bed and breakfast (8,5)
3 Alphabetise
4 Conditions
- 5 Electrifying (5-8)**
6 Free from contamination
12 Hotel employees
14 Colourful flower with glossy leaves
17 Trick-taking game
20 Handel opera

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



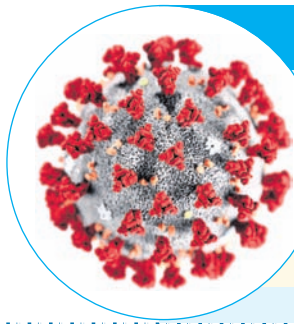
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



MISTY MORNING

After a gap of some days, the Capital city of Bhubaneswar witnesses fog and cold wave, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,44,20,272	6,74,63,480	20,20,217
India	1,04,95,816	1,01,28,457	1,51,564
Odisha	3,33,127	3,29,318	1,899

14K health workers get shots on day one

VAX DRIVE TO BE HALTED SUNDAY FOR OBSERVATION



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik collects feedback from vaccination centres through videoconference

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: On the first day of the Covid-19 vaccination drive, around 14,000 frontline health-care workers were administered the first doses of the Covid vaccine at 161 sites across the state.

As per data provided by the Health and Family Welfare Department, the target was to give vaccines to 16,405 health workers on the first day. Of which, 13,980 got shots till 8 pm of Saturday.

Districts like Angul, Balasore, Boudh, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Koraput and Sonepur have achieved 100 per cent target while 54 per cent achievement was reported in Keonjhar district.

Soon after completion of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech, the vaccination drive was launched in the state at 11.05 am.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik collected feedback from the vaccinated health workers from Sundargarh, Capital Hospital and Berhampur via video conferencing in the afternoon.

Congratulating the health workers for being vaccinated, Naveen appealed to one and all for extending cooperation in the most vital pro-

gramme of the year. "2021 has ushered in good news for all. The long wait has ended today. Our Covid warriors have been extending their services risking their precious lives for the last 10 months. We can never forget their dedication and sacrifice. We are proud of them," he said.

Thanking the scientists and researchers on the occasion, he said that they have enhanced the pride and glory of the nation by inventing the Covid-19 vaccine in a record time.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) PK Mohapatra said the vaccination drive will take a pause tomorrow (Sunday) and all the beneficiaries would be under observation by the health teams in respective districts. The vaccination will resume in the state again Monday, he said.

"We have prepared the database of 3.28 lakh health workers for the vaccination in the first phase. Considering the number of Covishield and Covaxin vaccines we have received, about 1.92 lakh health workers will be vaccinated in the first phase. We have planned to vaccinate the remaining health workers by January 25," Mohapatra told reporters here. For the second phase

611 inoculated in Capital

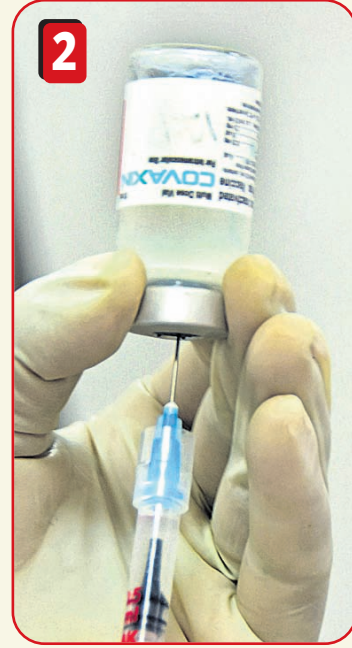
Bhubaneswar: The day one of the first phase of the vaccination here saw about 611 people inoculated, Saturday, at six centres under the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) area. Most of the injected included frontline workers. The six centres at Capital Hospital, BMC hospital at Old Town, Unit-IV Urban CHC, AIIMS, KIIMS and SUM Hospital saw about 139 doctors, 230 paramedics, 147 Class IV employees, 89 ANMs and seven others vaccinated on the first day. "We had targeted about 600 health workers to be vaccinated on the first day. However, we ended up inoculating 611. Biranchi Nayak, a safal karamchari, was the first to get immunized. Meanwhile, Capital Hospital with about 155 recipients administered most number of doses. Except for the urban health centre at Unit-IV, all other centres reported 100 vaccinations each. No complications were reported," informed a senior BMC officer.

of vaccination, the additional chief secretary said, the enumeration of other frontline workers such as police and fire services personnel have begun while the enumeration of the municipality workers, executive officers and the employees of the Revenue department will be done in the subsequent phases and will be completed by January 25.

The database of these frontline workers will be uploaded on the Co-Win portal. This will be followed by the vaccination of the persons above 50 years and the persons below 50 years having comorbidity, he stated.

Mohapatra said the health workers who were vaccinated Saturday will be given the second dose after 28 days. "These health workers will get the SMSes for the second dose and they will be vaccinated at the session sites where they have received the first dose today," he added.

Vaccination underway



1. A vial of Covishield vaccine developed by the Oxford University and AstraZeneca and manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute of India
2. A vial of Covaxin developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech with the help of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Institute of Virology
3. A woman being administered the vaccine at Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Saturday
4. A Covid-19 vaccination centre at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack decorated with balloons and flowers
5. Puri Collector Samarth Verma and Chief District Medical Officer Sujata Mishra inspect a vaccination centre in the Holy City
6. Health workers and frontline warriors waiting for their turn at a vaccination centre at Unit-IV in the Capital city



10kg tumour removed from man's abdomen

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: In a rare surgery, a tumour weighing around 10 kilograms was removed from the abdomen of a septuagenarian by a team of doctors from a hospital in the state capital. The patient was also operated earlier for a small tumour in Mumbai.

The man hails from western Odisha and was reported to be carrying a bulky tumour inside his stomach. Doctors said the tumour was rare as it arose from the fat inside the abdomen. As such tumours do not produce symptoms, it assumed an enormous size before it presented itself because of the size.

A team of doctors from the Apollo Hospital here undertook the surgery for three hours to cut out the tumour from the body. The patient is now said to be recovering and doing well.

Transport revenue up by 8% in Dec

TOTAL REVENUE COLLECTION FROM THIS SECTOR FELL BY 25 PER CENT BETWEEN APRIL AND DECEMBER OF 2020

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: Revenue generation from the transport sector was very low from April to October of this financial year (2020-21) due to lockdown and shutdowns imposed in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

However, it has now been on a revival path. The revenue collection from the transport sector was increased by 8 per cent in December compared to the previous year.

Revenues grew at 3 per cent in November and 8 per cent in December, sources in the State Transport Authority (STA) said here Saturday.

The state has collected motor revenues from vehicles to the tune Rs 157 crore in December 2020 compared to Rs 146 crore collected in



December 2019.

Similarly, the STA generated Rs 149 crore from the transport sector in November 2020 while it had collected Rs 145 crore in November 2019.

However, the total revenue collection from this sector fell down by 25 per cent from April to December of 2020-21 compared to the same period of the previous year, the

source said. The total collection for the first nine months of this fiscal came to Rs 973 crore against Rs 1295 crore collected in the first nine months of 2019-20, which is still 25 per cent less.

During the nine months from April to December, Rs 615 crore has been collected from motor vehicle taxes, Rs 113 crore from fees, Rs 21 crore from enforcement (e-challans) and the rest from share from national permits and other miscellaneous heads.

The state government recorded sales of 6.01 lakh units of vehicles in 2020 compared to 8.25 lakh units sold in 2019. The vehicle sales picked up in October with sale of around 72,000 vehicles compared to nearly 69,000 vehicles sold in November and 54,000 in December, they added.

2 BDOs, JE suspended for misappropriation of fund

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: The state government has suspended two Block Development Officers (BDOs) and a junior engineer (JE) for misappropriation of public fund provided under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) for construction of toilets.

Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department has issued orders in this regard. The suspended officers are Chittrakonda BDO in Malkangiri district Lariman Kharsel; BDO of Jhariaon in Nabarangpur district Debendra Bahadur and Jhariaon JE Sunil Samal.

While Chittrakonda BDO was suspended for gross irregularities in execution of individual household latrine (IHHL) programme, Jhariaon BDO and junior engineer were suspended for misappropriation of entitled money of IHHLs

under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) in Jhariaon block.

The order by the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department Friday said that Bahadur would need to report to DRDA headquarters in Nabarangpur under the administrative control of project director, DRDA. He should not leave the headquarters without prior permission of the project director of DRDA. Similarly, Lariman has been asked to report to DRDA headquarters in Malkangiri district under the administrative control of project director, DRDA. He has been asked not to leave the headquarters without prior permission of the reporting authority.

In November last year, about 100 beneficiaries lodged a complaint against Jhariaon BDO at the police station accusing him of diverting Rs 5 crore from the funds allocated for construction of toilets.

ECOR to run festive spl trains till March end

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to extend the running of 21 pairs of special trains originating from its jurisdiction up to the last week of March this year.

According to ECoR sources, the special trains include 02819/02820 Bhubaneswar-Anand Vihar-Bhubaneswar bi-weekly special leaving from Bhubaneswar every Wednesday and Sunday and from Anand Vihar every Tuesday and Friday will run up to March 31 2021 from Bhubaneswar and up to April 2, 2021 from Anand Vihar.



Similarly, 02880/02879 Bhubaneswar-Lokamanya Tilak Terminus (LTT)-Bhubaneswar bi-weekly special leaving from Bhubaneswar Mondays and Thursdays and from LTT every Wednesday and Saturday will run up to March 29, 2021 from Bhubaneswar and up to March 31, 2021 from LTT.

08479/08480 Bhubaneswar-Tirupati-Bhubaneswar weekly special leaving from Bhubaneswar every Saturday and from Tirupati every Sunday will run up to March 27, 2021 from Bhubaneswar and up to March 28, 2021 from Tirupati.

On the other hand, 02839/02840 Bhubaneswar-Chennai-Bhubaneswar weekly special leaving from Bhubaneswar every Thursday and from Chennai every Friday will run up to March 25, 2021 from Bhubaneswar and up to March 26, 2021 from Chennai.

02845/02846 Bhubaneswar-Bangalore Cant-Bhubaneswar weekly special leaving from Bhubaneswar every Sunday and from Bangalore Cant every Tuesday will run up to March 28, 2021 from Bhubaneswar and up to March 29, 2021 from Bangalore Cant, said the ECoR source.

Dolphin population in Chilika jumps to 156

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: After emerging as a favourite destination of migratory birds, the Chilika lake has also turned out to be a safe haven for rare Irrawaddy dolphins.

This came to the light after the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) conducted an annual survey on the biodiversity of the lagoon, which is the largest lake along the east-coast of India. The population of dolphins has increased to 156 in 2020 as against 150 in 2019, an official said.

The Irrawaddy dolphin is the flagship species inhabiting the Chilika lake. The CDA, in a statement, said that the present distribution range of this species is only in Asia, from Chilika to Indonesia. Irrawaddy dolphins in India are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, CITES (Appendix-I) and IUCN Red List.

The CDA has initiated many conservation measures for the protec-

tion and conservation of Irrawaddy dolphins in the past in close coordination with the wildlife wing of state Forest department, CDA chief executive Susanta Nanda said.

He said that in the past there had been a survey and identification of dolphin habitat in the lake for proper management, dolphin watching protocol was formulated, sensitisation training of tourist boat operators was conducted, widening and deepening of Magarmukha channel was undertaken for free movement of dolphin from outer channel to the main lake.

The annual population estimation survey of Irrawaddy dolphin has been conducted by CDA since 2003. The annual survey conducted January 15, 2021 by Transact Survey Method, followed worldwide for population of aquatic mammals.

Each survey team was equipped with binoculars, GPS, Range finder and data recording sheets.

ANNUAL SURVEY

THE ANNUAL POPULATION ESTIMATION SURVEY OF IRRAWADDY DOLPHIN, WHICH WAS CONDUCTED JANUARY 15 BY TRANSACT SURVEY METHOD, FOLLOWED WORLDWIDE FOR POPULATION OF AQUATIC MAMMALS

A BIRD CENSUS REVEALED THAT A TOTAL OF 12,42,000 INDIVIDUALS OF 105 WATER BIRD SPECIES AND 26,405 INDIVIDUALS OF 76 WETLAND DEPENDENT SPECIES WERE COUNTED FROM THE ENTIRE LAGOON

DURING THE FLORA AND FAUNA MONITORING OF CHILIKA, FIVE SPECIES OF SEAGRASSES—HOLODULE UNINERVIS, HOLODULE PINIFOLIA, HALOPHILA OVALIS, HALOPHILA OVATA AND HALOPHILA BECCARII— WERE REPORTED

gal embankments) at places. One significant population of dolphin is now observed in southern sector, by moving from other sectors, the official said.

A total of 18 teams had conducted the annual count of the dolphin population for around six hours.

While 10 teams of experts conducted the counting in Balugaon area and eight teams were engaged for the counting in Satapada area, Nanda said, adding that restriction on the visit of the tourists to the lake was also imposed during the counting period. A bird census conducted

January 5, 2021 also revealed that a total of 12,42,000 individuals of 105 water bird species and 26,405 individuals of 76 wetland dependent species, were counted from the entire lagoon. "This year, more birds are found in Central and Southern sectors of Chilika. An increase in

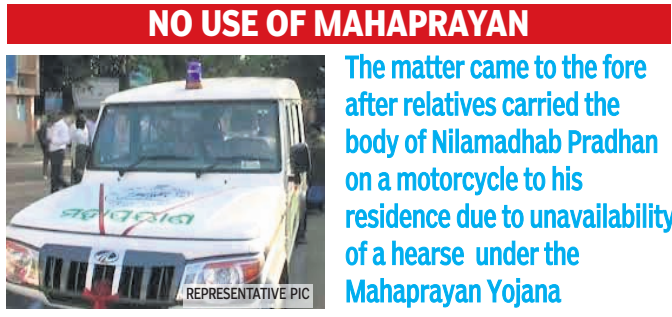
Body carried on bike in Ganjam village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagannathprasad, Jan 16: Even as the state government has launched free hearse service under the 'Mahaprayan' Yojana for free transportation of bodies from government hospitals to their homes, the service continues to elude the needy and the deserving in Ganjam district, a report said.

The matter came to the fore after relatives carried the body of Nilamadhab Pradhan, 70, of Jirabadi village on a motorcycle to his residence due to unavailability of a hearse van under the Mahaprayan Yojana. Pradhan died of cardiac arrest while he was undergoing treatment at the Jagannathprasad Community Health Centre (CHC) in Ganjam district.

Family members asked the hospital authorities to arrange a government-run Mahaprayan vehicle or an ambulance to transport the body back to their house. However,



NO USE OF MAHAPRAYAN

The matter came to the fore after relatives carried the body of Nilamadhab Pradhan on a motorcycle to his residence due to unavailability of a hearse under the Mahaprayan Yojana

the authorities expressed inability to arrange a hearse van due to unavailability of the vehicle at the hospital. Moreover, it was not possible for an ambulance to reach the CHC from Bhanjanagar, alleged the family. Family members contacted private auto-rickshaws in the hospital but the latter demanded Rs 2,000 to carry the body to their home around 2 km.

Left with no options, the family members carried the body on a motorcycle for more than 2 km to reach

Jirabadi where his last rites were conducted. This sparked resentment among onlookers as they clicked the photographs and video of the body being ferried on a motorcycle which later went viral on social media.

When contacted, the medical officer of the CHC said the hospital has no Mahaprayan vehicle while the government has not instructed them to use the 102 and 108 ambulances for transportation of bodies to their place of residences.

370 Deogarh villages child marriage free

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: A total of 360 villages in Deogarh district have become child marriage free after different stakeholders have decided to come onboard to end the social menace.

A notification in this regard was published Saturday by the office of Collectorate, Deogarh. The district administration claimed that the Gram Panchayat Task Force has recommended declaring 370 villages free from the age old social menace.

According to the district administration, the Block Level Task Force also authenticated the claims and after scrutiny, found it okay to declare the villages free from the evil



of underage marriages.

According to people working in the sector, this is a major success ever reported from any district as such a large number of villages have not come forward to declare themselves to shun the practice.

In a communication to the Integrated Child Development Services, the district administration said, "With an objective to prevent child marriages and ensure adolescent empowerment, I am to say that as per the recommendation of

the Gram Panchayat Task Force and authentication by the Block Task Force, a total of 370 villages of Deogarh have been declared as 'Child Marriage Free Village'.

The state government on the other hand has vowed to end the practice of child marriages by the end of 2030. The state often sees close to 20 per cent child marriages. Several child marriage victims meanwhile have openly revolted against the social pressure to call off such illegal marriages.

The government last year awarded several children who did not undertake such marriages while several parts of the state have child panels where kids work together to end the menace in their local areas.

AMRI employees vow to donate bodies, organs



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: Several employees of AMRI Hospital, Bhubaneswar Saturday vowed to donate organs and their bodies on the occasion of the 7th Rising Day.

The commitment was made during a special awareness session organized by the hospital with the assistance of the Body and Organ Donation Society of India (BODI). Experts in the session tried to bust myths around organ and body donations and urged people to come forward for the noble cause.

Nilanjana Mukherjee, AVP, Operations & Administration, Unit in-charge, AMRI Hospitals Bhubaneswar said, "The organ donation rates in India are very poor at 0.3/million as compared to some western countries where it is as high as 36/million. So, it is time that everyone realised the motto and pledged for organ donation, to bring the much needed change in the society overcoming the doubts and myths."

Mukteswar Dance Fest 2021 concludes on a high note

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: The three-day long Odissi Fest at the magnificent Mukteswar temple here concluded on a high note with spell-binding performances of Odissi by renowned Odissi dancers of national and international repute. It was as if the dancing damsels were coming alive out of the 10th century monument Mukteswar Temple, indisputably one of the most refined and beautiful temples of Odisha.

The evening's programme was started after lighting of the lamp by Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, minister, Odia language, literature & culture and tourism; Shreemaya Mishra, chairperson, OTDC Ltd., Guru Aruna Mohanty, secretary, Orissa Dance Akademy; Sachin Ramachandra Jadhav, director, tourism and Sangita Gosain, chief executive, GKCM Odissi Research Centre.

The first programme of the evening was a chorus in honour of Lord Shiva eulogizing the glory of Lord Shiva presented by music director Guru Srinibas Satapathy and his group.

Renowned hearing-impaired danseuse Sonali Mohapatra started



her programme with Mangalacharan followed by Abhinaya choreographed by Durga Charan Ranbir and music composed by Sukanta Kumar Kundu. Her last item was pallavi choreographed by herself.

Sripunya Mohanty and Pratap Barik performed a duet. They presented pallavi choreographed by Guru Aruna Mohanty followed by Abhinaya choreographed by Guru Aruna Mohanty and music composed by Guru Dhaneswar Swain.

The concluding item of the evening was a group Odissi presentation by Jyotsnarani Sahoo and the group of Soor Mandir, Cuttack. Their first item was Vandana-Shivamaya followed by Geetabhinay-Rasanuraga and the last item was Sudha Nrutya - Keerti Kalabati choreographed by Guru Jyotsnarani Sahoo and music composed by Guru Swapneswar Chakraborty. The programme was anchored by En Srinivas Ghatuati and Sanhati Pani.

State reports 178 more Covid-19 cases, 1 death

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: The state reported 178 new Covid-19 cases Saturday, taking its tally to 3,33,127, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

One more person died of the disease, following which the toll rose to 1,899, said the official. Of the new cases, 103 were reported from different quarantine centres.

Sundargarh recorded the highest 30 new cases, followed by Sambalpur (24) and Jharsuguda (23).

Eight districts—Boudh, Dhenkanal, Jagatsinghpur, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Nayagarh and Nabarangpur—did not register any new cases since Friday, the official said.

The latest death was reported from the Sundargarh district. Odisha has 2,087 active cases at present, while 3,29,088 patients have recovered.

The state has so far tested over 73.46 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 26,490 Friday.

Odisha's positivity rate stands at 4.53 per cent.

Meanwhile, India has reported 15,158 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, taking the country's total number of Covid-19 cases to 1,05,42,841. The country has also recorded 175 deaths apart from the fresh cases.

Over the past day, India has also reported a total of 16,977 discharges, as per Union Health Ministry records, taking the total number of recovered cases to 1,01,79,715. India now has 2,11,033 active cases in total.

With 175 deaths, the country's death toll has reached 1,52,093. Meanwhile, the world has seen over 2 million deaths due to Covid-19 so far since the beginning of the pandemic, sources said.

Kidney racket adds one more victim

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: One more person Saturday accused Himanshu Bhushan Nanda of cheating him by assuring to arrange a kidney donor around five years back. Earlier, the Nayapalli police Wednesday arrested Nanda for reportedly cheating a person of Rs 5 lakhs on the pretext of arranging a kidney donor for transplantation.

The commissionerate police Saturday brought Nanda on a three-day remand for further probe into the issue. Alok Ranjan Chaini of Marshaghai in Kendrapara Saturday lodged a complaint with the Saheed Nagar police in this regard.

According to the complaint, Chaini, a contractor, was informed by his doctors that both his kidneys have been damaged a few years back. Later, Chaini posted a message on his Facebook account seeking help from interested donors in 2015.

Subsequently, Nanda and Sanjay reached the private hospital at Acharya Vihar where he was undergoing treatment. Sanjay introduced himself as the Orissa coordinator for body parts transplantation section of a reputed hospital in Kolkata.

On the other hand, Nanda informed Chaini that he had personally donated one of his kidneys to a person who was suffering from kidney failure. They also told Chaini that they were active members of a charitable trust engaged in such activities.

They took Chaini to Kolkata where they got him diagnosed by a doctor at the reputed hospital in Kolkata. They even promised him to arrange a free of cost transplantation operation at a private hospital at Chandrasekharpur here.

A convinced Chaini later trans-



ferred more than Rs 6 lakh into the account of Sanjay and Nanda. Sanjay had also taken another Rs 1.50 lakh from Chaini.

However, after receiving the amount they started avoiding Chaini. In 2017, Chaini reportedly lodged a case with police at Marshaghai in this regard, but to no avail.

A dejected Chaini saw a ray of hope after coming across the news reports regarding the arrest of Nanda.

Nanda, a resident of Kendrapara district, was earlier arrested by the Nayapalli police on the basis of a complaint lodged by Pratap Chandra Mishra, one of the victims. The commissionerate police also came across a similar complaint against Nanda lodged at Laxmisagar Police station by Diptimayee Sahoo of Angul. Nanda had allegedly taken Rs 3.19 lakh from Sahoo to arrange a kidney donor for her ailing mother undergoing treatment at a private hospital in the city.

Thursday, Ashok Kumar Nayak, a resident of Rangamatia in Mancheswar police limits, accused Nanda of cheating him in the same manner. Nanda had taken around Rs 18 lakh from Nayak assuring him to arrange a kidney donor too.

SCULPTURE ON GANDHIJI



Artisans at Kathagada Sahi in Cuttack work on a bronze sculpture on Mahatma Gandhi which would be installed at a newly-constructed park to commemorate the centenary of Gandhi's first visit to the Silver City

Mercury dips to 5.8°C at Phulbani

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: With the return of coldwave to the state, mercury fell down below 10 degree Celsius at five places, Saturday. As per the report of Bhubaneswar MeT Centre, Phulbani remained the coldest place by recording the lowest temperature of 5.8 degrees Celsius preceded by Jharsuguda (7.6 degrees), Darnagbadi (8 degrees), Sundargarh (8.5 degrees) and Keonjhar (9.9 degrees).

Balangir recorded a minimum temperature of 10 degrees Celsius while Sonepur recorded 10.2 degrees, Bhawanipatna—10.5, Sambalpur—10.8 degrees and Angul—11 degrees.



Places like Chandbali, Baripada, Hirakud, Talcher, Koraput, Titlagarh, Nayagarh and Boudh witnessed a night temperature of below 15 degrees Celsius, the Met Centre said.

The twin city of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack saw minimum temperature of 16 and 15 degree Celsius, respectively.

Dense fog occurred at various parts of the state with poor visibility at many places including in Bhubaneswar Saturday morning. The Met centre said shallow to moderate fog would occur at a few places of Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Nawarangpur, Boudh, Nayagarh, Khurda, Puri, Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack districts during Sunday night and early Monday.

State Tribal Museum offers a dope on Lanjia Saora attire



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: With the Covid-19 yet to be tamed, museums in the state are working on a virtual mode. The state tribal museum is no different. It offers its visitors a grand tour of the museum as well as an exclusive video on Lanjia Saora attire in a virtual mode.

The Lanjia Saora community lives in a scattered settlement in Gajapati and Raygada districts. The men are easily recognized by their distinct attire. Be it coarse cotton clothes, their white loin cloth, with red fringes locally called Arsiolekan, is worn so

that both the embodied ends hang down in the front and back like a tail or Lanja. The draping of this garment gives the community the name Lanjia Saora. Tribal lifestyle writer Debashis Patra said, "The uniqueness of this tribe can be seen through these amazing videos where their clothes depict more about their lifestyles in particular."

The Saora men wear a few ornaments purchased from the local market and during ceremonial occasions a tuft of white feathers is attached to their headwear and a string of bells worn on top of a length of red cloth wrapped on the upper half of their bodies.

The Lanjia Saora community lives in a scattered settlement in Gajapati and Raygada districts. The men are easily recognized by their distinct attire

The women wear a coarse whitecotton skirt that reaches up to the knees. Their upper part of the body is covered with another piece of cloth. Now blouses are also worn in its place. This simple attire is accentuated by dis-

tinctive ornaments. Wooded ear plugs are worn on enlarged holes. Spirals and rings decorate the helix. A low bun is held in place with a low bun pin that may also be used as a weapon.

Several chains may be added for beauty. Necklaces and anklets are also worn. In the past, facial tattooing was common. The Lanjia Saora believes that the spirit world govern their lives. The multiple earrings worn by the women, in particular, the women shaman, are set to enhance their ability to listen to the demands of the spirits and help guide the life of the community, cure illness and ensure prosperity.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

In the Court of Hon'ble Executive Magistrate, Angul, I, Banya Baishali Mohanty, D/o. Tushar Kanta Mohanty of At/Post- Turanga, Plot No. - 6175, Sital Vihar, Angul declare that all the Certificates, Marksheets (HSC, CHSE, B.Tech, M.Tech) are damaged by white ants. Banya Baishali Mohanty.

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Where people trek miles for PDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliguda/Kotagad, Jan 16: There are still many remote areas in tribal-dominated Kandhamal district, which are yet to see basic development and people have been suffering a lot due to lack of road connectivity.

Sadly, development has been a dream for people of nine inaccessible areas under Durgapanga panchayat. Here, people have to trek miles to bring PDS items and buy essential commodities, a report said.

According to the report, Durgapanga panchayat consists of 13 wards, including nine villages like Dimili, Bundu, Bhaluguda, Pahirmala, Lifrang, pandrasala, Kanibaru, Sakarjodi and Badipanga.



All these villages are across the Timbili river.

People have to come out of their villages, but have to cross the river every day.

Locals say, "Dimili village is five km from Durgapanga panchayat office. There is no road from here.

Sadly, development has been a dream for people of nine inaccessible areas under Durgapanga panchayat. Here, people have to trek miles to bring PDS items and buy essential commodities

Durgapanga panchayat consists of 13 wards, including nine villages like Dimili, Bundu, Bhaluguda, Pahirmala, Lifrang, pandrasala, Kanibaru, Sakarjodi and Badipanga. All these villages are across the Timbili river

They alleged that people even take three days to walk up and down while bringing home PDS and essential commodities from Durgapanga and Kotapad bazar

The only way is to walk 40 km to bring PDS, and that too, after negotiating with a river and a creek."

They alleged that people even take three days to walk up and down while bringing home PDS

and essential commodities from Durgapanga and Kotapad bazar.

Leading life is always fraught with dangers in the treacherous forested region crisscrossed by bridgeless rivers.

They said they have to set out from their homes along with food stuff two days before the date slated for PDS delivery. For PDS, their life is put at stake in the dense forest.

In case, they have nothing to eat, they go hungry during the journey. On the way, they have to take shelter on the verandah of other's houses on the way. It's more difficult for women who are seen carrying their kids on shoulders along with PDS sacks.

In cases of medical emergency, and in the monsoon, their miseries compound. Patients and expectant mothers are carried on cots or slings to Durgapanga where they have to wait for hired vehicles or ambulances.

These villages have been left in utter neglect in all sectors like electricity, drinking water and road connectivity and education.

Electricity is a dream for the region. Locals say, after the sunset, they remain indoors. Except two villages, other villages are in the throes of drinking water crisis.

They have demanded that the state government take immediate steps for building road infrastructure in the remote region.



Under 'Mo Gelha Jhia' programme, a mother and her girl child are being feted with gifts in Digapahandi NAC area of Ganjam

PMO apprised of possible delisting of Bhitarkanika from Ramsar site

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Jan 16: The state government's bid to draw fresh water from the Kharasrota river at Barundiha under Rajkanika block in this district for a mega drinking water project in Bhadrak district might lead to delisting of Bhitarkanika wildlife sanctuary from the list of the major world wetlands in Ramsar site, a report said.

Notably, the Bhitarkanika mangroves forest was designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 2002. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It's named after the city of Ramsar in Iran where the convention was signed in 1971.

The matter came to the fore after social activist Sanjay Behura wrote (letter no-0015902/21) to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) seeking its intervention and urgent solution to the issue, Saturday. Earlier, Khitish Kumar Singh of Khadianga wrote twice to the Union government demanding a freeze on the project.

Behura said the mega drinking water project is being implemented at Nuahat under Chandbali block in Bhadrak district under the Basudha Yojana at an expenditure of Rs 892 crore. The scheme envisages drawing of water from Kharasrota river at Barundiha through large pipes and supply of the same to 91 panchayats in

KHARASROTA DRINKING WATER PROJECT



Bhadrak district.

The implementation of the project has led to a serious face-off between the residents and the state government. It has become a do or die battle for the residents as they claim the state government is implementing the project without making a proper assessment of its impact on the biological diversity of Bhitarkanika and local agriculture, he said.

Residents claimed establishment of the project will deprive them of water for farming and stop flow of fresh water into Bhitarkanika sanctuary which will seriously affect its biological diversity.

They claimed that the mangrove forests which acted as a shield against the cyclonic storms have grown with the mixture of saline water of the Bay of Bengal and the fresh water of the Kharasrota river. The mangrove forests are also home to scores of reptiles, and wildlife in the sanctuary.

Behura said according to the Dynamic Water Assessment Survey Report of the Centre,

Bhadrak district has a presence of 17021 HAM (Hybrid Annuity Model) while the Kendrapara district has groundwater of 5445 HAM. He said supply of river water from here to Bhadrak district is wrong as the groundwater level in the district is much less compared to Bhadrak district.

The survey report also states that the place where the project is being implemented has high presence of groundwater for which it is wrong to draw water from the Kharasrota and supply it to Bhadrak district.

The report states that the groundwater of Aul, Rajkanika, Rajnagar and Mahakalapara is unfit for consumption as the water is highly saline in nature. These blocks are also deprived of any drinking water project.

He said the project consultancy agency and an IIT survey report on the impact of the project in Kendrapara district has overlooked the bio-diversity of Bhitarkanika and the impact it will have on the local farming, he added.

Teacher hacked to death; accused held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuchinda, Jan 16: A teacher was found dead at Hadipalli under Kuchinda police limits in Sambalpur Saturday morning. The deceased was identified as Ramchandra Jaipuria (45). A person was arrested at Darakapada with help of villagers.

Reports said, the teacher was seen going on his bike to a river for bath. Hours later, his family members found the body with multiple wounds in a pool of blood. He was a teacher at Khandokata UGME school.

His family members filed a complaint at the police station, alleging foul play. Police registered an investigation in the case. However, the motive of the murder was not known.

4-yr-old swallows plastic whistle, dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Anandapur, Jan 16: In a freak incident, a four-year-old died after a plastic toy got stuck in his throat. The incident took place at Arjunbania village under Anandapur block in Keonjhar district Friday.

The deceased has been identified as Sonu, son of Manu Naik. According to the deceased's aunt Sukanti Naik, Sonu was playing with a plastic whistle. After a while, his mother found him lying unconscious on the floor. He was immediately rushed to Anandapur sub-divisional hospital.

The doctors there declared him received dead. The doctors cited the reason for the death as swallowing a plastic toy. Since the child was playing alone, unattended, he might have put the whistle into the mouth and then it got swallowed and got stuck in the throat.

Ghasipura police station sub-inspector Manoranjan Bisi said that an unnatural death case (Case No-4/21) has been registered and an investigation is underway.

Farmers block road over procurement blues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur/Chandahandi, Jan 16: Upset over problems in paddy procurement, scores of farmers staged a road blockade in Chandahandi of Nabarangpur district Saturday.

The agitating farmers stacked paddy sacks on the road at Hanuman Mandir Chhak for hours, disrupting traffic.

They alleged that paddy at four mandis under this block was not being lifted while 3 kg of paddy is reduced per quintal on the grounds of poor standard. They pointed out that though there is provision of providing sacks to farmers, it is not being done at all.

Tehsildar Hrudananda Singh majhi, LAMPS's MD Umesh Chandra Tripathy and Chandahandi police rushed to the agitation site and tried to placate them, but the farmers refused to budge from agitation. They made it clear that if



the administration gives them written assurance that their paddy would be lifted, they would withdraw their agitation.

Reports said that for the last 15 days, paddy is lying stocked at Chandahandi, Pujari guda, Koilimunda and Dhadipani mandis. 3453 farmers have registered their names for procurement. The target is to procure 2 lakh quintals of paddy. Farmers have got their tokens while their eyes have been scanned. The RMC has tested the quality of paddy while LAMPS have weighed the paddy. But millers are not lifting the paddy, they alleged. The tehsildar assured that the issue would be sorted out soon.

Couple attempts suicide; man dies, wife battling for life

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, Jan 16: A man died and his wife is battling for life after the couple allegedly consumed poison for reasons yet to be known at Marakuta village under Sadar police limits in Jharsuguda district.

The incident occurred Friday morning. But the police came to know about it in the evening before recovering the body Saturday morning. The deceased was identified as Gobardhan Oram (30), a resident of Ubuda village under Lakhapur block. Some local residents first noticed the body near a bush in Marakuta village in the evening and informed the police. Later, a team from the Sadar police station rushed to the spot.

The police in the presence of the magistrate recorded the statement of the woman at Jharsuguda district headquarters hospital (DHH) where she is undergoing treatment.

Search for Gori's male partner soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, Jan 16: Albino crocodile Gori, a star attraction for visitors to Bhitarkanika sanctuary, has been living a lonely life. This, however, is set to change as the forest department scouts for a partner for her.

Regarded as a treasure for Bhitarkanika sanctuary, this amphibian is 46 years old. The authorities in the past had brought several crocodiles, even from abroad, to give her a partner. But choosy Gori had rejected them all. The Forest Department, however, hasn't given up on her.

HR Bustard, an Australian zoologist, who set up the first artificial albino crocodile hatchery in the sanctuary, had collected 25 eggs from a crocodile nest at Kalibhadia island in the sanctuary and cultured them. Out of 25 eggs, 11 hatchlings came out. One hatchling was



exceptional. Since its colour was white, Bustard christened it 'Gori'.

Gori was kept in a separate pond for her special care. She attained puberty at the age of 11. Following the direction of Bustard, a crocodile of the sanctuary was released at the pond for mating. But Gori had rejected him. Instead of mating with him, she had turned hostile towards him, attacking him.

Then a crocodile from Hyderabad was brought along. She had also spurned his love. She had got so angry that, she had killed that male crocodile. Then the forest department officials had brought an albino crocodile from Australia named Roetor. This time too, Gori rejected his advances, leaving the forest department officials a worried lot.

According to a recent development, upon the completion of crocodile census in Bhitarkanika sanctuary, a team of expert will collect information about Gori. It is learnt that the process of bringing a crocodile of Gori's age from out of the sanctuary will start after the census. It will also be found out if Gori will be taken out of the enclosed pond and released in the river in the sanctuary.

Worth mentioning, the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during his visit to Odisha in 1984 had expressed his desire to have a glimpse of Gori. Honouring the Prime Minister's wish, the amphibian was brought to Bhubaneswar in a special charter plane.

Rajiv Gandhi was learnt to have got overwhelmed seeing Gori. Gori again hogged limelight in 2010 when she was made the mascot of Youth Festival organised in Bhubaneswar.

Damodar Mela begins; tribals immerse ashes of ancestors

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 16: Damodara Mela, one of the major festivals of Santhal tribals, kick-started at the famous Triveni ghat in Mayurbhanj district Saturday. Thousands of tribals, attired in traditional clothes from various parts of Mayurbhanj, Jharkhand and West Bengal thronged the Triveni ghat (confluence) of Budhabalanga, Jarali and Sarali rivers.

They immersed the ashes of their ancestors at Sunamuhin Ghat amid beatings of the traditional musical instruments.

Baripada municipality has made necessary arrangements for devotees at the fair. Fire department personnel and police were deployed at the Triveni ghat while facilities like drinking water, rest houses, lighting, watch towers and first aid have been made.



However, with Covid pandemic in mind, the administration has scrapped the arrangement of roadside makeshift shops

The fair will be celebrated for three days. The mass festival assumes importance for tribals as they immerse the ashes of dead persons in the river during the festival. Not only tribals in

Mayurbhanj, but also those living in the entire north Orissa, neighbouring Jharkhand and West Bengal took part in the mass immersion of ashes.

As per tradition, tribals preserve the remains of the dead till this festival. They believe that immersion of the ashes of their forefathers at the confluence of

tribals believe immersing the ashes of their forefathers at the Triveni Ghat is a sacred duty

the Damodar Yatra, a local outfit called Bhanj Disam Pargana Mahal Baruni Ghat Sunamuhin Committee has made elaborate arrangements for the people. They strongly believe that by taking part in the Damodar Yatra, tribals earn virtues.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, TUSURA
At/P.O.: Tusura, Dist.- Balangir, PIN - 767 030
e-mail: nactusura@gmail.com
No. 63 Date: 16.01.2021

1st CORRIGENDUM TO DETAILED QUOTATION CALL NOTICE FOR SANITATION OUTSOURCING No. 1693/01.01.2021

The detailed quotation call notice of 1693/01.01.2021 for sanitation outsourcing of Check list Sl. No. 2 i.e. "Minimum 200 labours" may be read as "62 Nos." & Sl. No. 13 i.e. "Last 10 F/Y" may be read as "Last 5 F/Y" as per DTCN. The other term & conditions will remain unchanged as per the "DTCN".
Sd./- Executive Officer
Notified Area Council, Tusura

e-procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, GOPALPUR
Tender Call Notice No.- 77 dt.: 15.01.21
Bid Identification No.- 02/2020-21

Bid document consisting of work, estimated cost, cost of Tender paper, E.M.D., time of completion, class of contractors and the set of terms and condition and condition of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Total Number of Civil works	2 Nos.
Estimated Cost	Rs.62 to Rs.75 lakhs
Date & time of availability of Bid Documents in the portal	11.00 A.M. of dt. 18.01.2021 to 6.00 P.M. of dt. 28.01.2021 for online bidding
Last Date of receive of Bid through Online	6.00 P.M. of dt. 28.01.2021
Date of opening of Bid	11.00 A.M. on Dt. 01.02.2021

Sd./- Executive Officer, N.A.C., Gopalpur

Government of Odisha No. O-898
"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 08 of 2020-21

1	Number of Works	: 02 Nos. of Road and 20 Nos. of Building Works
2	Estimated Cost	: Rs.0.88 lakhs to Rs.34.82 lakhs
3	Period of Completion	: 6 Months for Road Works & 1 Month for building work
4	Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	: 19.01.2021 at 11.00 hrs.
5	Last date & time for receipt of Bids in the portal	: 28.01.2021 at 17.00 hrs.
6	Date of Opening of Tender	: 29.01.2021 at 17.00 hrs.
7	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur

Further details can be seen from the Government website; www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Executive Engineer
Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur
OIPR-25056/11/0008/2021



The Divine Truth is greater than any religion or creed or scripture or idea or philosophy.

SRI AUROBINDO



Why BJP hates Nehru

I was being interviewed for my book and was asked a question unrelated to it: Why does Hindutva hate Nehru so much? It is an interesting question and has two parts to the answer: To know it we must first understand what Nehru was and what he wanted.

Before Independence, Nehru wrote a series of works through which he aligned himself to India as a civilisational entity of the sort that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh also approves of. He traces the modern nation to its origins in the Indus Valley Civilisation (discovered only a few years before he wrote Glimpses of World History and only 15 or so years before he wrote Discovery of India) to the periods of the first and second millennia after Christ.

But having acknowledged that India was ancient, Nehru sought also to align it to the modern world and the era he was a part of and the future that he saw for all mankind. To that end he used the State as an instrument to modernise. Nehru based his strategy on two things: Heavy industry and higher education. India had limited resources but these two would get priority.

You could argue about whether the strategy was good, bad or indifferent but it would be difficult to say that he did not execute what he sought out to do. Having determined that he was going to modernise this civilisational entity he set about doing it because Nehru was not only a man of vision (you could argue with him about whether your vision was better) but also a man of action.

He began building institutions, including some that are called today the Navratnas but were then nothing and needed to be built. Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (1964), Oil and National Gas Corporation (1966), Steel Authority of India (1954), Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (1964), Indian Oil Corporation (1959), ISRO (formerly IN-COSPAR, 1962), Department of Atomic Energy (1954), Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (1954). And then Nehru set up the Indian Institutes of Technology (1951), the Indian Institutes of Management (1961), the National Institute of Design (1961), the Sahitya Akademi (1954). The list goes on.

Why were all these set up? They were set up because they are the means through which Nehru determined India would be modernised. He inherited a pre-modern economy, where the vast majority of production lay in agriculture and that agriculture was being managed by a farmer whose means of farming had little changed over 1000 years.

Nehru did not inherit a trillion dollar economy. He had to figure out how to get India there. The problem is that nobody in Hindutva has any vision, good, bad or indifferent, when compared to Nehru including our prime minister. He can offer us statements like “\$5 trillion economy” but he does not say, because he does not himself know, what to do to get there.

More importantly he does not know what the State needs to do differently to get there. You can only build institutions if you can think of what to do with them. The reason Modi has not built institutions while Nehru was so prolific is because Modi does not have even Nehru's starting point.

Nehru said: Heavy industry and higher education. What does Modi say? If the answer to that is difficult for you to come up with it is because there is no answer. This is the first reason the BJP and Hindutva hates Nehru: Jealousy. The second reason is that Nehru was not a fraud nationalist. He was a real one. He did not only name China, he fought it. Nehru lost because Nehru fought. And he fought because he could not bear the thought of surrendering any land of his precious India.

Foreign minister S Jaishankar said at the Ramnath Goenka Lecture on 14 November 2019, that Nehru should have accepted Zhou Enlai's offer on the border dispute during Zhou's 1960 visit. What was the offer? That India accept the Karakoram range as the boundary. This is actually where the Line of Control exists today. But this was not acceptable to Nehru. He wanted the border much further into Tibet. And he was willing to fight for it. He may have lost, yes, but he did not give up India's claim.

This is unlike Modi who has not only given up the claim, he is unwilling even to name the opponent for fear of what China might do. This is the second reason the BJP and Hindutva hate Nehru. He was a nationalist who exposed thoroughly their own fraudulent nationalist credentials.

The name Nehru is used far too loosely in today's time without much understanding of what he stood for because we have not explained his thinking in simplified terms. He is not only much superior to whatever came after him, particularly as we see now in a period of economic collapse and national security failure, but he is a model for modernity. He died more than 55 years ago but is still spoken about and his legacy is all around us. Of how many prime ministers, including this current one, will we be able to say that?



Aakar Patel

The name Nehru is used far too loosely in today's time without much understanding of what he stood for because we have not explained his thinking in simplified terms



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A DIFFICULT TRADE-OFF BETWEEN FOOD SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENT

FOCUS ENVIRONMENT

A DIFFICULT TRADE-OFF

The farmers are agitating for ensuring the continuation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) by legislation. One aspect of this demand is that they be assured of minimum remunerative prices for their produce. Another aspect is that MSP can become the instrument for saving our rivers.

According to the Consortium of the Indian Institutes of Technologies that made the Ganga River Basin Management Plan, rivers are the best measure of the overall health of our environment. The condition of our land is reflected in the rivers through agricultural runoff. River water will become poisonous if the land has become poisonous due to the use of pesticides. The same will happen if the air is polluted. Maintenance of the health of the river requires that it has sufficient water just as maintenance of the health of a human being requires that her body has sufficient blood.

There are two claimants to the river's waters. The first claim is of farmers who want the water for irrigation. The second claim is from the river herself and the fishermen, fish, turtles, aquatic vegetation, and the human beings who want to enjoy the beauty of the river and take a dip in her waters. A river may be considered to be 'alive' if she has enough water to provide for these uses. The government has to decide how much water may be given to the farmers and how much to the river. The water allocated to the river is called environmental flows or e-flows for short. A number of studies have been made to assess the amount of e-flows that are required to keep the river alive. I will discuss these in relation to the Ganga although the same logic applies to all rivers.

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) based in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in which the Government of India also has a stake, had suggested in 2006 that rivers can be classified in various categories from 'A' to 'E' that is, from the best to the worst. IWMI



According to the Consortium of the Indian Institutes of Technologies, rivers are the best measure of overall health of our environment

recommended that 67 per cent e-flows must be released if the status of the Ganga was A-class, 44 per cent if the status was B-class and 29 per cent if the status was C-class and so on. It then classified the status of Ganga in 2006 as C-class. Thus, 29 per cent e-flows should be released even if the status was maintained as it were in 2006. However, the government declared the Ganga as our National River in 2009. One would expect that we should raise her to A-class. In that case 67 per cent water should be released as e-flows.

The Allahabad High Court, in a matter that was argued by senior advocate Arun Kumar Gupta, passed an order in 2011 that 50 per cent of the water should be released from Narora into the main channel as e-flows. Then, the World Wildlife Fund recommended in 2012 that 47 per cent of the water should be released from Bithoor located upstream of Kanpur. Then the Consortium of Seven Indian Institutes of Technologies recommended that 55 per cent e-flows should be released from the Pashulok Barrage at Rishikesh that diverts water to the Chilla hydropower project. The IITs did not assess the amount of water to be released by the irrigation barrages in the plains. However, the

Pashulok Barrage is located only 15 kilometers upstream from the Bhimgoda Irrigation Barrage at Haridwar. Therefore, we can take the recommendations for Pashulok Barrage to be applicable for Bhimgoda Barrage as well. Then an article published in the scientific journal Current Science published by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, suggested that 50 to 60 per cent should be released as e-flows into the Yamuna River. The Ministry of Water Resources also issued a report in 2015 which supported the recommendations of IITs that 55 per cent e-flows should be released.

Now comes the catch. The Ministry of Jal Shakti, which was earlier called Ministry of Water Resources, issued a notification in October 2018 requiring the release of 36 cubic meters per second (cumecs) water from the Bhimgoda Barrage in the non-monsoon period and 57 cumecs in the monsoon period. For the downstream barrage at Bijoor, Narora and Kanpur, it stipulated the release of 24 to 48 cumecs as e-flows. This works out to 6 per cent or less of the water available at these locations. Thus, the Ministry has ignored the high court order and the studies mentioned above and instead of requiring the release of about 50 per

cent e-flows, it has required the release of only 6 per cent water. The Ministry has bent backwards to supply water to farmers; and ignored the river herself and the fishermen, fish, turtles, aquatic vegetation, and the human beings.

We are confronted with a difficult trade-off between food security and environment. Our farmers are often misusing the canal water which is supplied to them on per-hectare land that is irrigated irrespective of the amount of water used. Therefore, they flood the fields more than what is necessary. The solution is that the farmers must be required to pay for the volume of the water that they use. This will lead them to use the water judiciously and ensure food security with the use of much less water. However, volumetric pricing will lead to an increase in the cost of production. This can be managed by making a proportionate increase in the MSP.

The ultimate burden will fall on us - the city-dwellers - who buy food grains from the market. We will have to pay higher prices for the grains since the MSP would have been increased. The choice before us is whether we want cheap grains or we want living rivers. We the people have to take a decision what is it that we want. It seems to us that livelihood of fishermen; life of fish, turtles and aquatic vegetation; and the happiness of human beings who want to enjoy the beauty of the river and take a dip in her waters is far more important than the price of food grains. Therefore, the Ministry of Jal Shakti must not implement the high court order for the release of 50 per cent e-flows or follow the studies that point in that same direction. At the same time the government must assess the burden of volumetric pricing of water on farmers and raise MSP accordingly.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM REVOLUTION

The eternal promise of the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring that erupted a decade ago was a quest for human dignity whose protagonists sought to overcome decades of repression, poverty, and inequality. It occurred in two waves, the first cresting in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, followed by a second in 2019-20 in Algeria, Sudan, and Lebanon.

Sadly, neither wave fully achieved the protesters' aims. Instead of undergoing a genuine transition to freedom and social justice, almost all Arab Spring countries have reverted to various combinations of autocracy and various degrees of poverty and violence. Except for Tunisia, to a certain extent, most Arab societies are more polarised and fragmented today than they were before.

Democracy is not like instant coffee. It needs an enabling environment and a hospitable culture to flourish and grow. A history of colonialism, followed by decades of authoritarianism, meant that this environment was absent in the Arab world. The people who revolted and took to the streets loathed the regimes that had tyrannized them for so long. But they lacked a clear, unified vision of the change they sought.

"Bread, freedom, and social justice" was the rallying call, but translating this into a more democratic reality proved hugely prob-

lematic. Without a robust and vibrant civil society - labour unions, political parties, associations, and independent media - it was impossible to agree on a transitional road map following the swift fall of Arab dictators.

Once the lid of repression was lifted, the revolutionaries splintered along a variety of ideological lines. The region's dire political, social, and economic conditions had previously led many Muslims to believe that only the certainties of their faith could offer them a refuge from misery and the promise of a better future. And after the Arab Spring erupted, a deep schism divided Islamists and secularists.

This lack of social cohesion and consensus on basic values has proven to be the major Achilles heel of democratisation efforts in the Arab world. It allowed the remnants of the old regimes to regroup, recombine, and rebound quickly with familiar authoritarian vigour.

Once the old regime reconstituted itself, the struggle in most cases became a vicious fight for power between the entrenched "deep state," the military, and various religious groupings that were the only organised non-state forces. Each had its own agenda; most were largely allergic to democracy or modernity. Lost in this struggle were the

interests of the masses who had triggered the Arab Spring in the hope of a better life - food security, quality education, decent health care, and a modicum of freedom and dignity. With the exception of a few pawns co-opted by those in power, the protesters ended up being marginalised or persecuted. Many became dejected and simply gave up.

Some outside powers meddled significantly, because they thought the region was too important to be left to determine its own future. The economic and technical support required to support change, as well as the necessary practical and legal advice, were not forthcoming. For example, although Tunisia desperately needed only modest economic assistance to ease the pain of transition, nobody stepped up, because the country was not considered strategically important. Sudan is a more recent example of this.

As a result, those who champion democracy and human rights are often seen as using these values instrumentally to serve their parochial interests. But history suggests that the quest for freedom, though invariably long and uneven, is inevitable and unstoppable. Despite many setbacks, the Arab world's large population of young people has traded apathy for awareness and engagement, with social media playing an empowering role.

Four lessons from the Arab Spring could be useful in guiding the region's political trajectory. First, an independent and active civil society is key. Without platforms to organise and advocate for change, calls for reform are easily stifled.

Second, the need for social cohesion to fend off outside meddling cannot be overstated. Ideological reconciliation, specification of the relationship between religion and the state, and a readiness to compromise are indispensable foundations of a functioning democratic state.

Third, the transition to democracy must be incremental. Just as no one jumps directly from kindergarten to university, the democratisation process must be inclusive and carefully calibrated, with clear milestones. A starting point could be a common vision to improve human rights.

The final lesson of the Arab Spring - tragically apparent in Libya and Syria - is that those in power must be persuaded that it is in their interest to come aboard. For any regime, gradual change is surely preferable to the prospect of an abrupt upheaval that threatens to replace those in power with a power vacuum.

The writer is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure. MARK TWAIN
- Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. KAHLIL GIBRAN
- Many people are alive but don't touch the miracle of being alive. THICH NHAT HANH

WORDSWORTH

Xenoglossy

Xenoglossy is the ability to speak a language without having learned it. This sounds like a really neat trick if you can manage it. However, a typical place to find it is in the Journal of Parapsychology. That's because the ability is regarded as a psychic phenomenon. It might come about because a person has been regressed to a previous incarnation through hypnosis. Or a medium might be in communication with a spirit person who speaks another language. The OED dates its first appearance to 1914; it's from Greek xenos, stranger or foreigner, plus glossa, language; another spelling is xenoglossia. It sounds as if it's related to speaking in tongues, which is regarded among Christian groups such as the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit (though the phenomenon is found in many religions and has been recorded from the earliest historical times); the formal term for that is glossolalia (the second half from Greek lalia, speech). But from a language point of view the difference is profound: in xenoglossy the implication is that a real language is being spoken that is intelligible to native speakers and in which the person can converse, while glossolalia is a succession of meaningless syllables interpretable only through faith.

LOL

Those who don't know

The world is divided into two groups. There are those who know, and those who don't know. Those who know are no problem. Those who don't know are also in two groups. One is those who don't know



and know they don't know. Well, they can learn!

But then, there are those who don't know, and don't know they don't know. And they become unit managers!

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

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

Government should intervene

Sir, It is a matter of great concern that different social media platforms are using our data for their business purpose which is unlawful. According to WhatsApp's new privacy policy, from February 8, 2021 users will have to accept the policy otherwise their account will be closed. This has created a situation of inconsistency among users who are now starting to shift to other messaging apps like Telegram and Signal. In fact Facebook is seeing how Google is making billions of dollars through its advertising promotions through Gmail, Google Drive, Google Cloud, Google AdSense, Google Pay and YouTube. This means that all your data is in Google's possession. Google is using your data for its own business. The same thing Facebook wants to do through WhatsApp. It is the duty of the government to intervene in this matter and take corrective measures. If this is not stopped at the right time, huge scams can't be denied in the near future.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Evolving digital technology

Sir, In the world today digital technology is evolving with each passing day. Though there have been many fields benefitting from digital technology, it is the marketing field that has been thriving a lot on digital technology. Knowledge is the best and safest treasure to acquire as the saying goes. With due knowledge and great confidence, we humans can rise up to the new challenges posed by future. Nowadays, marketing has to be multifaceted, coping with all kinds of competitive trends out there. For instance, product management, promotion and sales are some of the key areas to be covered by marketing strategies. Besides this, the dynamic digital marketing world has just got a plethora of revelations. According to a recent survey, almost 93 per cent of the online interactions start with a search engine. On the other hand, GetResponse says that email marketing has been evolving as trustworthy and more relevant like never before. All these interesting revelations point to a clear paradigm shift towards the digital world. That is why digital marketing matters the most. Apart from making big bucks through wider reach and best output, digital marketing helps improve business tie-ups between marketing companies and the clientele. In short, digital technology and digital marketing are all real money spinners. The message is clear and even louder across the board.

P Senthil Saravana Durai, MUMBAI



Shah briefs party leaders about roadmap for WB polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 16: Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting with the West Bengal core committee at his residence and briefed them about the roadmap to win 200 seats in the state.

He asked them to run a campaign at the booth level to associate more workers with the party. Shah's model of 'panna pramukh' will also be adopted in West Bengal. Every worker will be given the responsibility to woo the voters in favour of the party. According to sources, the issue of the disgruntled MPs and MLAs of TMC willing to join the BJP was also discussed.

The meeting was earlier scheduled to be held at party's headquarters at 3 p.m. but later it was de-



decided that the meeting will be held at Shah's residence. All the prominent West Bengal BJP leaders reached his residence at 6 p.m. for

'Panna pramukh'

Amit Shah's model of 'panna pramukh' will also be adopted in West Bengal

Every worker will be given the responsibility to woo the voters in favour of the party

the meeting which was attended by party's national vice president Mukul Roy, national general secretary and in-charge of West Bengal Kailash Vijayvargiya, state president Dilip Ghosh and state organisation general secretary Amitabh Chakraborty.

Sources said that the meeting lasted for around two hours and Shah took feedback from the lead-

ers about the seats where Trinamool Congress (TMC) has the stronghold. While stressing at giving respect to the party loyalist, Union Home Minister said a campaign should be run to connect new workers with the party to strengthen the organisation in the state.

Shah appealed all the leaders to work together like they worked in 2019 in order to win 200 seats in the upcoming state Assembly elections. Party's national president JP Nadda recently launched a 'ek mutthi chawal' campaign to connect with the farmers during his visit to West Bengal.

In the wake of ongoing farmers' protest, Shah has asked the party leaders of all the states to connect with the farmers and inform them about the work done by the Modi government for the farmers.

'Proud moment' for kin of Kashmiri-origin woman named in Biden's team

Sameera Fazili is the second Kashmiri-origin Indian-American appointed to a key position in the incoming Biden administration



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 16: Kashmiri-origin Sameera Fazili's parents wanted her to be a physician, but she was not quite in agreement.

Fazili's plans frustrated Friday when the Biden-Harris Transition named her as the deputy director of the National Economic Council at the White House. The council coordinates the economic policy-making process and provides advice to the US president.

Fazili is the second Kashmiri-origin Indian-American appointed to a key position in the incoming Biden administration. Her appointment has sparked off jubilation in her extended family in Srinagar.

"We are very proud. Everybody in Kashmir should be proud as it is a proud moment for the whole Kashmir," her uncle Rouf Fazili told PTL. "It is a great honour and respect for every one of us and a great occasion."

"She was not born here and her parents left the Valley in 1970-71, but she has a strong affinity with Kashmir," Rouf Fazili said. "The last time she visited the valley was in 2007."

Rouf Fazili did not have the opportunity to speak to her niece as she was very busy with US President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, which will take place Wednesday. "But, I spoke to the rest of the family and, obviously, they are very happy!" he added.

Another close family member said Sameera Fazili, whose father is a surgeon and the mother is a pathologist, was a bright child and brilliant in her studies.

"Her parents wanted her to be a physician, but she had other plans. Her inclination was towards public service," the relative said.

Sameera Fazili is a very active person who loves skiing, swimming, tennis and travelling, the relative said, adding that she was very fond of Kashmiri cuisine.

She is currently the economic agency lead on the Biden-Harris Transition and was earlier posted at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, where she served as the director of engagement for community and economic development.

In December, another Kashmiri-origin woman, Aisha Shah, was named as partnerships manager at the White House Office of Digital Strategy.

In the Obama administration, Sameera Fazili served as a senior policy advisor on the White House's National Economic Council and as a senior advisor at the US Treasury Department in both Domestic Finance and International Affairs.

Prior to that, she was a clinical lecturer of law at Yale Law School. Originally from Buffalo in New York, she now lives in Georgia with her husband and three children. Sameera Fazili is a graduate of Yale Law School and Harvard College.

Boost to solar energy: Bengal allows net metering for houses

Net metering concept allows to set-off the number of units produced from total consumption and the consumer pays electricity charges of only what he had derived from the grid or discom



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 16: In a bid to popularise solar energy in the state, the West Bengal government has allowed net metering for individual household rooftop solar panels starting from 1 KW, an official said.

Earlier institutional, commercial, industrial and cooperative housing were only allowed the benefit of net metering and that too for 5 KW capacity onward.

The West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission in its recent amendments to the Cogeneration and Electricity Generation from Renewable Sources Regulations 2013 had allowed net metering for individual households from 1 KW but had restricted it to 5 KW, a top official told PTL.

"To boost renewable energy use, we have allowed net-metering of solar power installation from 1 KW to 5 KW. Now there is no restriction and anyone can install rooftop solar panel. Earlier regulations did not allow net metering for common households," a WBERC official said.

However, a consumer cannot install solar panels more than its own load. That means if a household has an existing electricity load of 2 KW then his installation cannot be higher than 2 KW even if he has space and interest, a WBERC official said.

The net metering concept allows to set-off the number of units produced from the total consumption and the consumer pays electricity charges of only what he had derived from the grid or distribution company.

The regulation allows set-off of up to 90 per cent of his solar power generation for any month.

The new amendment mandates "gross metering" facilities for solar system installation capacities above 5 KW.

The commercial benefit for a consumer is far less in case of gross-metering compared to net-metering thus making adoption less commercially attractive.

The Union Power ministry in its model regulation had provided gross metering over 10 KW solar installations, the official added.

Cong, Left to formalise seat sharing in Bengal by Jan 31

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 16: The Congress and the Left will finalise their seat sharing formula for the upcoming Assembly elections in West Bengal before January 31, sources told IANS Saturday.

Speaking to IANS, Congress in-charge for West Bengal, Jitin Prasada, confirmed that four leaders have been deputed to hold talks on seat sharing with the Left parties in the state.

"We have nominated Abdul Mannan, Pradeep Bhattacharya, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Nepal Mahata to hold talks with the Left leaders," said Prasada.

The Congress had contested 92 seats in the previous elections, when the Mamata Banerjee led Trinamool Congress had swept the polls.

The Congress has a twin problem in hand. It is going to fight the elections against Mamata Banerjee who is an ideological ally at the Centre, while the rising force in Bengal continues to be the BJP.

Prasada said that the Left and the Congress will fight both the fronts. "When it comes to Mamata Banerjee, law and order is a big issue whereas the BJP wants to erase Bengali heritage and history," Prasada told IANS.

The IANS C-Voter State of the Nation 2021 survey published by IANS Saturday showed that the satisfaction level with Banerjee has



TWIN PROBLEMS

The Congress has twin problems in hand. It is going to fight the elections against Mamata Banerjee who is an ideological ally at the Centre, while the rising force in Bengal continues to be the BJP

The elections are also important for the Congress because after losing Madhya Pradesh to an internal coup, a substantial loss would further demoralise the party cadres

remained high despite aggressive campaigning by the BJP in the state. As per the survey, 52 per cent of the people are satisfied with Mamata Banerjee's performance. This is despite the fact that the BJP has become very visible in West Bengal.

In the 2016 Assembly elections, Trinamool had swept 211 out of 290 seats, whereas the Congress got 44,

Left 24 and the BJP 3 seats.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the picture was again very different when the Trinamool got 22 seats, the BJP 18 and the Congress just 2 seats. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Trinamool had secured 34 out of 42 seats, but the BJP was able to increase its vote percentage to 17 per cent. It shows that both times Bengal behaved differently during Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections. This time too, the BJP has decided to go for an aggressive campaign but Mamata remains a formidable challenge.

The Left and the Congress, on the other hand, are banking on exchange of votes. But last time the Congress did better than the Left as the Left was able to transfer votes to the Congress candidates but the vice versa could not take place.

Kashmir forest dwellers look to FRA to stop evictions

Mostly concentrated in or near forests, Kashmir has a tribal population of about 1.1 million, according to 2011 census

REUTERS

Srinagar, Jan 16: Forest dwellers in Kashmir are pinning their hopes on the implementation of a 14-year-old law to save their land and homes, as the government announces plans to evict tens of thousands of people it says are encroaching on protected land.

Last month, the forest department published a list of about 63,000 people it says are living and farming illegally on a total of 15,000 hectares (37,000 acres) of forest land.

Now the tribal communities living in the region's forests are looking for protection under India's Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006, which is coming into effect in the region more than a decade after it was enacted elsewhere in India.

Zahid Parwar Choudhary of the Jammu and Kashmir Gujjar Bakarwal Youth Welfare Conference said the law would ease the persecution of tribal communities, which rights campaigners say has intensified under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party.

"If the FRA was implemented in Jammu and Kashmir earlier, we would not have seen the eviction of dozens of families and the harassment of hundreds of families," said Choudhary, who presides over the nonprofit working for tribal rights.

The FRA aimed to recognise the rights of at least 150 million indigenous and rural people to inhabit and live off about 40 million hectares of forest land.

Javaid Rahi, general secretary of the Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation, noted that the law should have automatically gone into effect after the removal of Kashmir's special status in August 2019.

Following calls from rights ac-



tivists and intense media scrutiny, the government announced in November 2020 that it would implement the law. The deadline for collecting applicants' information was Friday, with the aim of approving all eligible claims by March.

But, Rahi said, there are still concerns among forest communities.

"For example, as per the FRA, the Gram Sabha (village representative body) of a village, which defends the rights of the forest dwellers, should be formed in a meeting attended by (at least) 50% of the voters in the village," he said.

"But, this norm is being violated in most of the villages."

Kashmir's director of rural development, Qazi Sarwar, who is overseeing the law's implementation, denied that authorities are not following the rules of the law.

"There are complaints somewhere, which we will look into. But, it is not happening in every Gram Panchayat," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a phone interview.

EVICTIIONS

Abdul Aziz Khatana, a herder from Lidroo village in southern Kashmir, keeps worrying about one thing: how will he survive without the small mud and wood hut he stays in during the six-month migration to graze his livestock every summer?

In November last year the forest department demolished the hut, he explained, saying the land it was built on had been illegally occupied.

"I had been using it for years to protect myself from wild animals and bad weather. How did the forest department declare it illegal all of a sudden, I wonder?" asked Khatana, who supports a family of five. "The forest is our source of income. Forests also provide us shelter. We can't think of living without forests."

The herder said he was offered no compensation, but has applied under the FRA. If he qualifies, he could get the land back and some money to rebuild his hut, he added. Tribal rights activists and re-

searchers say Kashmir's forest dwellers have increasingly been targeted for eviction in recent years.

In early December, forest dwellers in Kanidajjan village said the government felled thousands of their trees after accusing them of encroaching on forest land.

A month earlier, villagers in Pahalgal in south Kashmir said the forest department demolished at least 13 huts and reclaimed more than 85 acres (34 hectares) of land from villagers.

"Hundreds of forest dwellers have been evicted in different places. This is like throwing the birds out of their nests," said Rahi. Mohit Gera, Kashmir's principal chief conservator of forests, said that the evictions are meant to stop the illegal use of forest land and do not specifically target tribal communities.

"The forest department is not against people. In fact, we want to work with the people to protect forests. Any action is taken when forest land is encroached," he said.

LACK OF AWARENESS

Rahi said that lack of awareness among the tribal population about the law is a challenge, due to the low literacy rate among those communities.

According to the latest census figures, about half of Kashmir's tribal population is illiterate.

"We are now trying our best to make them aware by visiting them and using traditional and social media," Rahi said.

Those efforts are hampered by lack of access to high-speed mobile internet, he added.

The Indian government has limited mobile internet in most of Kashmir to 2G since the withdrawal of the region's autonomy.

Authorities say the communications blackout is needed to maintain order in the Himalayan region where security forces have been fighting a long-running separatist insurgency.

Gera, in the forest department, said whatever land is retrieved as a result of removal of illegal residents will be legally considered protected land.

He noted that India's forest conservation law allows the government to utilise forest land for a developmental project of public interest "only when there is no alternative but to use forest land which is holy and precious (protected)."

Raja Muzaffar Bhat, president of the anti-corruption J&K RTI Movement, said he has little confidence that the current procedure for implementing the FRA will improve the lives of Kashmir's forest dwellers.

"For example, the tribal affairs department, which is supposed to take care of the interests of the tribal population, is nowhere in the picture as the FRA is being implemented," Bhat said.

Standing up to dictatorial regime: Mehbooba hails Rahul Gandhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 16: History will remember Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for standing up to the "present dictatorial regime", PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said Saturday.

Taking to Twitter, Mufti said it is a fact that "new India is in the grip of a select few" and Gandhi is the only politician who dares to speak the truth.

"Ridicule Rahul Gandhi all you want but he's the only politician who dares to speak the truth. It's a fact that new India is in the grip of a select few & crony capitalists. History will remember him for standing upto the present dictatorial regime

(sic)," the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief said.

In another tweet, the former chief minister of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state said the Centre had "unleashed" its "pet agency" -- the National Investigation Agency (NIA) -- on farmer unions protesting against the three agril laws.

"GOs pet agency NIA is now being unleashed on farmer unions. The rot that has set into India's premier terror investigative agency can be gauged from the manner in which they are fabricating charges on Kashmiris, farmers & those who dare to dissent (sic)," she said.





The Prime Minister and Chief Minister (Uddhav Thackeray) should take the Covid-19 vaccine first and clear all doubts in the minds of the people. Once they get the vaccine shot, I am also ready to get myself vaccinated

FIRST-EVER BUS SERVICE IN ARUNACHAL BORDER AREA FLAGGED OFF

Over seven decades after India's Independence, the first-ever passenger bus service was flagged off in the Roing-Anini route in Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley district along the China border, officials said



of the day quote

The only way out of the impasse (farmers' agitation) is for the government to admit its mistake and agree to start with a clean slate

The charismatic (karishmaayi) performance by the Army during the India-China standoff has boosted the morale of the country and also enabled the citizens to hold their heads high

Every year, IFFI is organised by the central government and Goa government. Why? There should be participation from the film industry and other industries as well

NIA summons to scribes, farmer leaders in SFJ case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 16: In a surprise move, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has sent notices to over a dozen of people, including a journalist, farmer leaders associated with the agitation against three farm laws and others, in connection with its probe into the Sikh For Justice (SFJ) case, officials said Saturday.



nesses for investigation. "They have been called to be examined to ascertain certain details for the investigation," the official added.

An NIA official related with the development wishing not to be named told this news agency, "The NIA has sent notices to several people for examination." The official said that they have been called as witnesses to ascertain certain details of the case.

When asked who had been called besides the journalist, the official said, "I cannot specifically say about the profession of the individuals who have been called for examination."

The official said that the agency had called a number of people as wit-

The NIA had registered a case December 15 last year after a notification from the government under several Sections of the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

The FIR also said that huge funds are being collected abroad for on-ground campaign and propaganda against missions in countries like US, UK, Canada Germany and so forth

Pardeep Singh, Nobeljit Singh and Karnail Singh have also been summoned to appear before the agency January 17 and 18.

The NIA had registered a case December 15 last year after a notification from the government under several Sections of the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). In the FIR, which has been viewed by IANS, the NIA alleged that SFJ, an unlawful associ-

ation and other Khalistani terrorist outfits including but not limited to Babbar Khalsa International, Khalistan Tiger Force and Khalistan Zindabad Force along with their frontal organisations have entered into a conspiracy to create an atmosphere of fear and lawlessness and to cause disaffection in people and to incite them towards rising in rebellion against the government.

The FIR also said that huge funds are being collected abroad for on-ground campaign and propaganda against missions in countries like US, UK, Canada Germany and so forth.

These campaigns are being spearheaded by designated terrorists Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, Paramjit Singh Pamma, Hardeep Singh Nijjar and others.

The NIA FIR also alleged that SFJ and other pro-Khalistani elements involved in this conspiracy, through their incessant social media campaign and other wise, are radicalising and recruiting impressionable youth to agitate and un-

dertake terrorist acts for creation of separate nation of Khalistan after secession from Indian territory.

It is worth a mention that the NIA filed a charge sheet against 10 Khalistani terrorists in the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) case including designated terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun December 18 last year.

The agency has filed the charge sheet in the Special NIA court in Punjab's Mohali under several sections of the Indian Penal Code and the UAPA. The charge sheet was filed in connection with a case related to a series of acts of violence including acts of arson in Punjab during the year 2017-18, carrying out of propaganda activities both on-line and on ground campaigns in support of the SFJ and Referendum-2020.

These acts were committed by a gang of radicalised Sikh youth under direction and financial assistance from SFJ handlers located abroad as part of an organised conspiracy by the accused.

No inoculation for nCoV in Mumbai till Jan 18

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 16: The inoculation drive for coronavirus will be suspended in Mumbai for the next two days owing to technical issues with the Co-WIN app, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said Saturday night.

Co-WIN app allows registration for the vaccination.

"Digital registration is mandatory for Covid-19 vaccination, but on the first day of the drive today, the government had allowed offline registration in case of any technical problem," the civic body said in a statement.

However, the state government has now directed that all further registration should be made through the app, it added.

In view of this direction and problems with the Co-WIN app, inoculation in Mumbai will be suspended while the Union government removes the problem, an official said.

As to the rest of Maharashtra, a state government official said that no inoculation had been planned for the next two days in any case.

On the first day of the drive, of 4,000 healthcare workers scheduled for vaccination at nine centres in the city, only 1,926 were administered the jab, the BMC data showed.

The highest 289 health workers were given vaccines at Rajawadi hospital, followed by 266 at Bhabha Hospital, and 262 at Cooper Hospital which was also part of the nationwide live launch of the drive by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Only 39 healthworkers got the jab at the state-run JJ Hospital, while 220 persons were vaccinated at BKC center from where Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray launched statewide inoculation drive.

Ex-babus question clarity in PM-CARES Fund

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: A group of 100 former civil servants wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday raising questions over transparency in the PM-CARES Fund.

They said it is necessary that, for reasons of probity and adherence to standards of public accountability, the financial details of receipts and expenditures be made available in order to avoid doubts of wrongdoing.

"We have been keenly following the ongoing debate about the Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations, or 'PM-CARES', - a fund created for the benefit of people affected by the Covid pandemic.

Both the purpose for which it has been created as well as the way it has been administered has left a number of questions unanswered," they said in the letter. "It is essential that the position and stature of the Prime Minister is kept intact by ensuring total transparency in all dealings the Prime Minister is associated with," they said.

The letter was signed by former IAS officers Anita Agnihotri, SP Ambrose, Sharad Behar, Sajjad Hassan, Harsh Mander, P Joy Oommen, Aruna Roy, former diplomats Madhu Bhaduri, KP Fabian, Deb Mukharji, Sujatha Singh and former IPS officers AS Dulat, PGJ Nampootheri and Julio Ribeiro among others.



SHORT TAKES

Man found killed in his flat

Palghar: A 72-year-old man has been found lying in a pool of blood in his flat here in Maharashtra, police said Saturday. Police suspect that the deceased, identified as Jayprakash Phonda who was living alone, was killed on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, an official said. The incident came to light when a domestic help of Phonda visited the flat Friday morning.

5-year-old raped in UP village

Banda (UP): A 5-year-old girl was allegedly raped in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district, police said Saturday. The incident took place on Friday night in the village under the Girwa police station area, they said. A man has been arrested in this connection, Circle Officer (CO) Nareni Siyaram said. The 23-year-old man had lured the minor to a secluded spot by offering her Rs 10. He allegedly raped the girl there, the CO said. When the girl's family went to the house of the accused to complain about the incident, he and his family members threatened to kill them, police said.

Cold wave persists in Punjab, Haryana

Chandigarh: Cold wave conditions prevailed in Punjab and Haryana Saturday, with Bathinda registering a minimum temperature of 4 degrees Celsius, officials said. Among other places in Punjab, Amritsar, Ludhiana and Patiala braved the chill at 6.5, 7.8 and 6.7 degrees Celsius, respectively, up to three degrees above normal. Pathankot, Adampur, Halwara, Faridkot and Gurdaspur recorded minimum temperatures of 5, 6.8, 6.1, 6.6 and 9.2 degrees Celsius, respectively. In Haryana, Ambala, Hisar and Karnal experienced cold weather conditions at 5, 4.2 and 4.9 degrees Celsius, respectively, up two degrees below normal.

Man held for shooting wife

Nagpur: A 47-year-old man was arrested for allegedly shooting his wife with a pellet gun in an inebriated state in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, police said Saturday. The police have arrested Kishore Harishchandra Ramteke, a Class I officer in the state public works department, on attempt to murder charges, inspector Yuvraj Hande said. The accused had allegedly consumed liquor Thursday morning and created a scene in his locality under MIDC police station area, and later picked a quarrel with his wife Jyotsna (45) at home.

BRAVING THE COLD



Indian National Security Guard (NSG) commandos take part in the rehearsal for the Republic Day parade on a foggy morning in New Delhi

EC steps in to protect CEOs, officials from 'victimisation'

The Election Commission said it has noted some incidents of "victimisation" of CEOs and additional, joint, deputy and assistant CEOs in the post-election period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: Taking note of some incidents of "victimisation" of state Chief Electoral Officers and other election officials in the post-election period on flimsy grounds, the Election Commission has directed all states to seek its prior approval before initiating any disciplinary action against such officers during their tenure, as also up to one year after completion of their stint with the poll panel.

In a letter addressed to the Cabinet Secretary and Chief Secretaries of all states and Union Territories, the EC said it has noted some incidents of "victimisation" of CEOs and additional, joint, deputy and assistant CEOs in the post-election period.

"Many a times they are targeted for political vendetta by charging them with disciplinary cases on flimsy grounds for their earlier tenures in the state government after the completion of their tenure.



An environment of fear is created to convey that the upright, steadfast and sincere officers can be taken to task at any time, on the flimsiest of the grounds," the Commission noted.

It said in such a scenario, these officers are not only "demotivated but also their morale is greatly reduced, which severely affect their efforts to ensure free and fair elections".

"Left to go on unfettered, it causes a situation where officials are reluctant to join as CEOs and those who are inducted face the uncertainty of fair treatment in post-election phase," it observed.

The EC said it is of considered

view that positive protection to election officials from motivated harassment is essential to enable them in carrying out the electoral functions in free, fair, impartial and fearless manner.

In its directions, the Commission said "the state/UT governments shall invariably obtain prior approval of the Commission before initiating any disciplinary action against the Chief Electoral Officers and other officers up to Joint Chief Electoral Officer during their tenure and also up to one year from its expiry."

It also said that the state government and the union territory administration will not reduce facilities such as vehicle, security and other facilities or amenities provided to the office of the chief electoral officer for proper discharge of his or her duties. The letter pointed out that the matter of taking action against any officer on election duty was subjected to the scrutiny of the Supreme Court.

MILD INFECTION AFTER VAX A GOOD SIGN: AIIMS CHIEF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 16: AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria Saturday joined scores of healthcare workers across the country who were administered Covid-19 vaccine shots on the first day of the nationwide vaccination drive. Dr Guleria said mild infection or adverse reaction after vaccination is a good sign because it shows the immune system of the body is reacting to the vaccine and creating antibodies.

Moments after Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the vaccination drive across the country, the job was administered to the AIIMS chief on live telecast. Dr Guleria was the third person to take the shot. The first jab was administered to a sanitation worker named Manish Kumar, who became the first to be vaccinated at AIIMS in the country.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Dr VK Paul, who heads a government panel on vaccine strategy were also pres-



ent at AIIMS. Both Dr Paul and Dr Guleria received the Covaxin jab. However, Vardhan was not vaccinated Saturday. "I will get it when the time will come," said Vardhan.

After a gap of nearly an hour, Dr Guleria appeared before the media to share his personal experience after vaccination. He said he was feeling absolutely fine and he had no adverse reaction even after one-and-a-half hour of receiving the vaccine jab.

He emphasised that there are absolutely no issues associated with the safety of both vaccines - Covaxin and Covishield - and people should not at all be worried about vaccination.

SHOT IN THE ARM FOR HEALTH WORKERS

From being harassed to be among the first to get vaccine

Many doctors, nurses, sanitation workers and other frontline staff have lost their lives in Delhi since the first cases of the pandemic was reported here March 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: For Biji Tomy, a nurse who received the very first Covid-19 vaccine shot at the LNJP Hospital here Saturday, it was a "historic moment" that helped her leave behind the unpleasant memories of her colleagues being harassed and taunted as "potential coronavirus carriers" in the early days of the pandemic.

Hailing from Kerala, the 48-year-old healthcare worker at the state-run facility told this news agency, "When the pandemic outbreak happened in Delhi in March, everyone was afraid and uncertain about the future, and many doctors and nurses had to face harassment and taunts

from neighbours in the initial days as 'potential carriers of infection', and some landlords had threatened to evict them."

"But, today, we are getting applause and fellow citizens are hailing the healthcare workers," she said, adding, "It is our moment of reckoning, I guess, which is very humbling."

Several hundreds of healthcare workers, from doctors to sanitation workers at hospitals, were given shots of Covid-19 vaccine at 81 centres, after the world's largest vaccination drive was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi across the country.

"We were only trying to do our job when the virus had just invaded



our cities, and our country. We were not criminals that they subjected many of our fellow brothers and sisters to humiliation. But, it feels very

relieving today. People have understood we were trying to save lives, putting our own lives at risk," said Tomy, who hails from Idukki district in

Kerala. Many doctors, nurses, sanitation workers and other frontline staff have lost their lives in Delhi since the first cases of the pandemic was reported here March 1.

The Delhi government-run Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital, which was soon converted into a dedicated coronavirus facility and where over 10,000 Covid-19 patients have been treated so far, drew praise from both Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Health Minister Satyendar Jain.

Nurse Atmaja was administered a dose of Covishield in the presence of Kejriwal who visited the facility in the afternoon and interacted with a few healthcare workers.

At the hospital's vaccination cen-

tre, beneficiaries were warmly greeted with a rose after administering a shot and red carpet had been laid outside the main OPD Block of the facility to welcome them.

As they exited the vaccination area post 30-minute mandatory observation, their colleagues and staff of the vaccination team cheered and clapped with a sense of solidarity.

Among the doctors, who received the shots on the first day of the roll-out was Farah Husain, an anaesthesia specialist and one of the in-charges of the Covid ICU ward.

"Pride is quite natural and tremendous happiness, after all the hardships and deaths we have seen last year, as the city and the country fought the pandemic," she said.

of the day quote

It would be difficult for the poorer sections of the society to pay for the (Covid-19) vaccination



AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

If this party (BJP) comes to power, then surely Bengal will drown in the Ganga, as all programmes and projects of the Centre have typically flopped, bearing no results,



SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY | TMC RAJYA SABHA MP

What I can just say is that Nepal has always maintained good relations with our both neighbours. We never compare our relations with our friends



PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI | NEPAL FOREIGN MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

3 killed while flying kites

Hyderabad: Three persons, including two children, died while flying kites, in separate incidents since Thursday in Hyderabad, police said. Kite flying on the occasion of Sankranti turned tragic as two children were electrocuted in separate incidents while a man died after falling from a multi-storied building. K. Rakesh, 13, was electrocuted while flying a kite from atop his home at Nallavelli. The boy tried to remove it with an iron rod from the terrace, suffered an electric shock and died on the spot.

Missing girl found dead in UP

Lalitpur: The body of a 14-year-old girl, who had been missing for the last two days, was recovered from an agricultural field here, police said Saturday. The body was found in Jamalpur village under Talbehata police station area on Friday evening, they said. The girl went missing from her home on Thursday but her family did not inform the police, Circle Officer (CO) Devendra Kumar Singh said. The condition of the girl's body suggested that she had either consumed poison or was forcibly made to consume it.

Three arrested for kidnapping bizman

Patna: Days after sensational murder of 40-year-old Indigo Airlines station manager, a businessman of Danapur was allegedly kidnapped by 6-7 goons. The kidnapped businessman, identified as Abhishek Kumar, has been rescued by the Patna police Friday evening but the incident has induced fear in the people of Bihar especially businessmen. The accused came in two cars and forcibly abducted Kumar from his apartment Sai residency located at Gola road under Rupaspur police station Thursday night.

Ex-minister Kamal Morarka no more

Mumbai: Eminent industrialist and former Union Minister Kamal Morarka passed away here, Friday evening. He was 74. Morarka breathed his last following a heart attack. Hailing from Nawalgarh, Rajasthan, Morarka served as the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office in Prime Minister Chandrashekhar's government in 1990-91. Later, from 1988 to 1994 he was a member of Rajya Sabha elected from Rajasthan and also served as vice-president of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).



In India, why has no responsible functionary of the government taken the vaccine shots first if it is so safe and reliable?

MANISH TEWARI | CONGRESS LEADER

ARMY OFFICER DEVELOPS FIRST INDIGENOUS 9 MM 'MACHINE PISTOL'

Nagpur-based Indian Army officer Lt Col Prasad Bansod has developed the country's first indigenous 9 mm 'Machine Pistol', an official said here Saturday



S-400 defence systems purchase may raise India's friction with US

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 16: The United States has told India it is unlikely to get a waiver on its planned acquisition of Russian S-400 air defence systems, raising the risk of sanctions similar to those imposed on Turkey for buying that equipment, people aware of the matter said.

The Trump administration has been telling the Indians to drop the \$5.5 billion deal for five missile systems and avoid a diplomatic crisis, saying New Delhi did not have a wide waiver from a 2017 US law aimed at deterring countries from buying Russian military hardware.

That position is unlikely to change under the Biden administration that takes over next week and that has promised an even tougher US approach towards Russia, the people aware of the discussions told this news agency, speaking on condition of anonymity.

India says it needs the long-range surface-to-air missiles to counter the threat from China. India and China have been locked in a face-off on the disputed Himalayan border since April, the most serious in decades.

New Delhi has also affirmed its right to choose its defence supplies, potentially setting up an early point of friction with the new US administration.

"India and the US have a comprehensive global strategic partnership. India has a special and privileged strategic partnership with Russia," foreign ministry



The Trump administration has been telling the Indians to drop the \$5.5 billion deal for five missile systems and avoid a diplomatic crisis

That position is unlikely to change under the Biden administration which has promised an even tougher US approach towards Russia

New Delhi has also affirmed its right to choose its defence supplies, potentially setting up an early point of friction with the new US administration

spokesman Anurag Srivastava said about the proposed S-400 purchase.

"India has always pursued an independent foreign policy. This also applies to our defence acquisitions and supplies which are guided by our national security interests."

The United States imposed sanc-

toward international law.

India made an initial payment of \$800 million in 2019 toward the Russian deal and the first set of missile batteries are expected towards the end of this year.

Russia has traditionally been India's main weapons supplier but in recent decades the Indian government has turned to the United States and Israel for new planes and drones.

US officials believe there is still time for Delhi to reconsider, and that the punitive measures would only kick in if the deal with the Russians was "consummated."

Washington has told New Delhi that if India acquires the S-400 it would affect how its systems interact with US military equipment that India now has and would jeopardise future arms transfers such as high-end fighter planes and armed drones, according to the people aware of the matter.

"There is a narrow chance India can avoid sanctions, presuming the S-400 purchase is completed. At the moment, it's a good bet that sanctions will be applied against India," Richard Rossow, a specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said.

But the outcome could depend on how India-US defence cooperation progresses, he said, adding that India had been working with Washington on security in Asia more than ever before and this could be a mitigating factor.

PALGHAR LYNCHINGS

Thane court grants bail to 89 accused

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amritsar, Jan 16: Farmer leader Baldev Singh Sirsa Saturday said he will not be able to appear before the counter-terror task force, National Investigating Agency (NIA), Sunday owing to his pre-occupations relating to the wedding of his granddaughter and he would remain busy in family affairs till February 7.

He said he got the notice on WhatsApp at a short notice and there was no formal notice from the agency.

The president of Lok Bhalai Insaf Welfare Society, one of the unions participating in talks with the Government of India over the new farm laws, Friday night came to know from a reporter that the NIA issued him a notice in connection with a case registered against banned outfit the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ). Talking to the media in this Punjab city, Sirsa accused the Central government for trying to derail the farmers' protest by adopting various means.

"First, they (the government) tried to put pressure on us (farmers) through people and politicians

and then through the Supreme Court. Now it is using the NIA," he said candidly.

Without mincing words, he said, "The government is trying to 'torpedo' our agitation."

Accompanying three others who too got the NIA notice regarding the case against the SFJ activists, the farmer leader, who didn't participate in the last and the ninth round of talks between the farmers and the government, asked the NIA to give him time to appear before it after February 7.

"Before it, it is difficult for me to appear (owing to the marriage of my granddaughter)," he said.

Sirsa said many people associated with the agitation have got the NIA summons. "The government

tries to terrorise those working for farmers. We are not afraid and going to bend with such tactics. The government is bent on defaming the protest."

In a surprise move, the NIA has sent notices to over a dozen of people, including a journalist, farmer leaders associated with the agitation and others, in connection with its probe into the SFJ case.

Till date, the state CID has arrested 251 adults and 16 juveniles on various charges of rioting, attempt to murder, murder, etc for the lynching incident that sparked nationwide outrage April 16 last year

UNITED STRUGGLE



A farmer prepares food for fellow farmers during a protest against the new farm laws at Singhu border in New Delhi, Saturday

Reunion ends in tragedy: 11 die in road mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dharwad, Jan 16: Little would 11 of the past school students have expected this: A planned reunion in Goa ending on a tragic note.

All of them being girl students of 1989 batch from Saint Paul's School at Devangere, now in their mid-40s, constituted the group travelling in the ill-fated mini-bus that collided with a tipper-lorry at Itigatti village near the city Friday, claiming their lives.

The former had planned a three-day sojourn to Goa and visit places of tourist attraction.

Two of them had taken their daughters along.

According to police, 14 had left for Davangere in the van in the morning. While 13 of them hailed from the district headquarters town of Davangere, one was from Bengaluru. They were on the way to pick up their former classmate from Dharwad when the accident happened, police said.

Consent forms for Covaxin shot, compensation for 'adverse event'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: As India's vaccination drive began Saturday with Covid shots to health workers, those receiving Bharat Biotech's Covaxin were asked to sign consent forms that assured compensation if any adverse effect was found linked to the vaccine.

Recipients of Covaxin have to sign a consent form before being vaccinated because its use has been allowed by the government in "clinical trial mode".

The form says "COVAXINTM" is being offered under restricted use in an emergency situation and has been permitted in "public interest" as an abundant precaution. It also explains that the clinical efficacy of the vaccine is yet to be established and it is still in Phase 3 trials.

"The Bharat Biotech Covid-19 vaccine is a vaccine with approval for restricted use in emergency situation that may prevent Covid-19. In phase 1 and phase 2 clinical trials, COVAXINTM has demonstrated the ability to produce antibodies against Covid-19. However, the clinical efficacy of COVAXIN is yet to be established."

BJP Chief Ministers are the least popular: Survey

SEVEN OUT OF THE 10 MOST POPULAR CHIEF MINISTERS ARE FROM THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, WHILE SEVEN OUT OF THE 10 WORST PERFORMING CHIEF MINISTERS ARE FROM THE BJP/NDA CAMP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 16: Seven out of the 10 most popular Chief Ministers are from the Opposition parties, while seven out of the 10 worst performing Chief Ministers are from the BJP/NDA camp, as per the IANS C-Voter State of the Nation 2021 survey.

As per the survey, BJP Chief Ministers are the least popular CMs currently. In all BJP/NDA ruled states, the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is several notches higher than the popularity of the BJP Chief Ministers.

Non-Congress CMs are at times relatively at par or slightly more popular than Modi within their respective states. However, even the worst performing BJP/NDA CMs are more popular than Congress



leader Rahul Gandhi in their respective states.

Rahul Gandhi's leadership seems to be more of a liability rather than an asset for the Congress. All the Congress CM faces are way more popular than their Central leadership. The Congress is unable to

emerge as the fulcrum of the Opposition.

Among the poll-bound states, the Chief Ministers of Kerala, West Bengal and Assam have scored way better than the national average, thus indicating a pro-incumbency sentiment in these states as far as

CM candidates are concerned. The CMs of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry are among the bottom lot as far as satisfaction ratings are concerned, indicating anti-incumbency sentiments brewing up in these states, the survey found.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik is the most popular Chief Minister in the country, followed closely by Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi and YS Jaganmohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh.

On the other end of the spectrum is Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat, arguably the least popular Chief Minister in India followed closely by Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar and Punjab CM Amarinder Singh with the lowest satisfaction ratings in their respective states.

Out of those surveyed, 11 Chief

Ministers scored higher than the all-India average (42.8) nett approval ratings. Odisha, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh have the most popular leaders while 11 Chief Ministers score below the national average.

By this metric, Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand have the three least popular Chief Ministers in the country. Three large states governed by the BJP or its allies score below the national average - Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar.

The Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and West Bengal are doing better than the national average. It would be an overreach to read too much into the CM ratings as leaders often lag the unpopularity of their governments or legislators. Nevertheless, it is an important framework to view the state of politics in the country.

international



Remember, the vaccine will always be free on the NHS. Our staff will never ask for, or accept, cash for vaccines, never ask for your banking details or identity documents, and will never come around to your house unannounced

NIKKI KANANI | NHS MEDICAL DIRECTOR

EUROPEAN POWERS REBUKE IRAN

3 European powers Saturday warned Iran against starting work on uranium metal-based fuel for a research reactor, saying it contravened the 2015 nuclear deal and stressing that it had no civilian use but serious military implications



of the day quote

My grandparents (Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip) have had the vaccine and I am very proud of them for doing that. It is really important that everyone gets the vaccine when they are told to

PRINCE WILLIAM | DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE

It's just too easy to lay the blame on the variant and say, 'It's the virus that did it.' Well unfortunately, it's also what we didn't do that did it. That was an allusion to holiday merrymaking and other social contacts plus loosening adherence

MICHAEL RYAN | EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE, WHO

Science is succeeding — but solidarity is failing. Some countries are pursuing side deals, even procuring beyond need. Governments have a responsibility to protect their populations, but 'vaccinationalism' is self-defeating and will delay a global recovery

ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY GENERAL, UN

SHORT TAKES

Italy: Five die of gas leak

Milan: Five elderly residents of a nursing home near Rome have died of suspected carbon monoxide poisoning and another five residents and two workers have been hospitalised in serious condition, Italian media reported Saturday. Firefighters confirmed the deadly incident in the town of Lanuvio, with the hypothesis of a gas leak. A worker in the home found the residents and workers unconscious early Saturday, the news agency ANSA reported.

Iranian Guard holds missile drill

Tehran: Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard conducted a drill Saturday launching anti-warship ballistic missiles at a simulated target in the Indian Ocean, state television reported, amid heightened tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme and a US pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic. Footage showed two missiles smash into a target that Iranian state television described as "hypothetical hostile enemy ships" at a distance of 1,800 kilometers (1,120 miles). The report did not specify the type of missiles used.

Final execution carried out

Terre Haute: The Trump administration has carried out its 13th federal execution since July, an unprecedented run that concluded just five days before the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden — an opponent of the federal death penalty. Dustin Higgs, convicted in the killings of three women in a Maryland wildlife refuge in 1996, was the third to receive a lethal injection this week at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Social-distancing rules to extend

Seoul: South Korea Saturday announced its decision to extend the tightened social-distancing rules for two more weeks until the end of January amid an unabated Covid-19 resurgence. The Seoul metropolitan area, which covers the capital city, its surrounding Gyeonggi province and Incheon, will be placed under the second-highest Level 2.5 social-distancing guidelines until January 31, reported Xinhua.

'At 18mn, Indian diaspora largest in the world'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Jan 16: The Indian diaspora, one of the most "vibrant and dynamic", is the largest in the world, with 18 million people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020, the UN has said. The United Arab Emirates, the US and Saudi Arabia host the largest numbers of migrants from India, it said.

"India has the largest trans-national population in the world. It has the most migrants abroad — 18 million, which is a significant number and another feature which is very interesting about the Indian migrant population is that they're really distributed all over the globe," Population Affairs Officer in the Population Division at UN



VIBRANT & DYNAMIC

THE UAE, THE US AND SAUDI ARABIA HOST THE LARGEST NUMBERS OF MIGRANTS FROM INDIA

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Clare Menozzi said Friday. She said while some trans-national populations are re-

ally clustered in one country or region, the Indian diaspora is present in all continents and regions — from the Gulf to Northern America to Australia, UK.

"It's a very vibrant" and dynamic diaspora in the world, she said. The report, 'International Migration 2020 Highlights', by the Population Division of UN DESA, released on Friday said in 2020, 18 million persons from India were living outside of their country of birth. Other countries with a large diaspora included Mexico and Russia (11 million each), China (10 million) and Syria (8 million).

The report said India's large diaspora is distributed across a number of major countries of destination, with the UAE (3.5 million), the US (2.7 million) and Saudi Arabia

(2.5 million) hosting the largest numbers of migrants from India.

Other countries hosting large numbers of migrants from India included Australia, Canada, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar and the UK. Between 2000 and 2020, the size of the migrant population abroad grew for nearly all countries and areas of the world. India experienced the largest gain during that period at nearly 10 million, followed in order of magnitude by Syria, Venezuela, China and the Philippines. Migration from India is largely motivated by labour and family reasons, Director of Population Division at UN DESA John Wilmoth said at the launch of the report here, adding that forced displacement is a much smaller category (about 10%) in total.

VIRUS SURGE

China builds 1,500-room hosp in 5 days

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Jan 16: China Saturday finished building a 1,500-room hospital for COVID-19 patients in five days to fight a surge in infections in a city south of Beijing, state media reported.

The hospital is one of six with a total of 6,500 rooms being built in Nangong in Hebei province, the Xinhua News Agency said. All are due to be completed within the next week.



China, which largely contained the spread of the coronavirus, has suffered hundreds of infections this month in Nangong and the Hebei provincial capital of Shijiazhuang, southwest of the Chinese capital.

A similar programme of rapid hospital construction was launched by the ruling Communist Party at the start of the outbreak last year to set up isolation hospitals in Wuhan, the central city where the virus was first detected in late 2019.

Nationwide, the National Health Commission reported 130 new confirmed cases — 90 of those in Hebei — in the 24 hours through midnight Friday.

There were 645 cases, two of them acquired abroad, being treated in Nangong and Shijiazhuang, according to Xinhua. In Shijiazhuang, authorities have finished construction of one-third of the rooms in a planned 3,000-room coronavirus facility, state TV said Saturday.

More than 10 million people in Shijiazhuang underwent virus tests by late Friday, Xinhua said, citing a deputy mayor, Meng Xianghong. It said 247 locally transmitted cases were found.

Biden's virus plan: 100mn shots just the beginning

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 16: US President-elect Joe Biden has announced an ambitious goal of inoculating 100 million Americans with Covid-19 vaccines in the first 100 days of his administration, noting that the vaccine rollout in the country, the worst hit by the pandemic, has been a "dismal failure."

Ahead of his inauguration January 20, Biden on Friday held a briefing with his team on addressing the major health crisis that has engulfed the nation for nearly a year now.

The US is the worst-affected country in the world with more than 23,523,000 COVID-19 infections and 391,955 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus tracker.

During his election campaign, Biden, a Democrat, made tackling COVID-19 and the economic hardships it had put on Americans a core pitch to voters.

"The vaccine rollout in the United States has been a dismal failure



The vaccine rollout in the US has been a dismal failure thus far and in today's briefing we discussed five things, five things we will do in an attempt to turn things around

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT-ELECT, US

thus far and in today's briefing we discussed five things, five things we will do in an attempt to turn things around, five things to turn frustration into motivation, five things to help us meet our goal of 100 million shots by the end of our first 100 days in office. Some wonder if we are reaching too far for that

goal. Is it achievable? It's a legitimate question to ask," Biden told reporters in Wilmington, Delaware.

"Let me be clear; I am convinced we can get it done, and this is the time to set big goals to pursue them with courage and conviction because the health of the nation is literally at stake. First, we will immediately work with states to open up vaccinations to more priority groups," he said.

Biden said that the process of establishing priority groups is driven by science, but the problem is the implementation has been too rigid and confusing.

"If you were to ask most people today, they couldn't tell you who exactly is getting vaccinated. What they do know is there are tens of millions of doses of vaccine sitting unused in freezers around the country while people who want and need the vaccine can't get it," he said.

Exuding confidence, Biden said that his administration will fix the problem by encouraging states to allow more people to get vaccinated.

Pak PM's aide removed as PTV chairman by Cabinet

AGENCIES

Islamabad, Jan 16: The Pakistan Cabinet has removed Naeem Bukhari, a close associate of Prime Minister Imran Khan, as chairman of Pakistan Television (PTV), after the Islamabad High Court barred him from working as the head of the state-run channel, according to media reports Saturday.

Supreme Court lawyer, politician and former TV host Bukhari was appointed as chief of the state broadcaster in November last year, inviting criticism for getting benefit from his closeness to Prime Minister Khan.

In an embarrassment to Khan, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday restrained Bukhari from working as the PTV chairman while hearing a set of petitions challenging his appointment, citing it



a violation of a 2018 Supreme Court order in a similar case.

Justice Minallah had remarked that the Cabinet did not make a clear decision on relaxing the age limit for 65-year-old Bukhari.

The Cabinet, through circulation, took a decision in which Bukhari and two other PTV directors were removed from their posts as they were over 65 years, the Dawn News reported, quoting

Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry.

When asked why the decision was taken in haste and made through circulation instead of convening a formal meeting of the Cabinet, the minister said the government had to take a decision as presently the PTV was without a head and facing a "chaos-like situation", the report said.

The Cabinet also restored Aamer Manzoor as the managing director of PTV, the Geo News reported. Manzoor was removed by the corporation's board of directors January 1.

Barring Bukhari from serving as PTV chairman, the high court had directed the government to move a fresh summary for his appointment and clarifying special age relaxation for him. The court adjourned the hearing for two weeks.

'UK Covid variant could be dominant US strain by March'

AGENCIES

Washington, Jan 16: The more transmissible Covid-19 variant which was first detected in the UK late last year and has now spread to several countries across the globe, could become the dominant virus strain in the US by March, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warned in a report.

In the report issued on Friday, the CDC said new variant, which is 70 per cent more contagious, "could threaten already strained health care resources, require extended and more rigorous use of public health strategies and increase the percentage of the population immunity needed for herd immunity", The Hill news website reported.

According to the CDC, at least 30 countries have so far reported confirmed cases of the new Covid-19 variant, which was discovered in the UK last September. The US has reported 76 variant cases across 10 states.

"The increased transmissibility of the variant warrants universal and increased compliance with mitigation strategies, including



distancing and masking.

"Higher vaccination coverage might need to be achieved to protect the public," report said.

According to a model developed by the CDC, "rapid growth" of the variant is expected in the US in early 2021 before it becomes the dominant strain in March. The report urged the country to take additional measures to curb the spread of the Covid-19 variant, which includes more vaccination, physical distancing and wearing of masks.

"These measures will be more effective if they are instituted sooner rather than later," The Hill news website quoted the report as further saying.

As of Saturday, the country, currently the worst-hit in the world, has recorded 23,520,563 confirmed Covid-19 and 391,922 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins University.



A woman walks through chunks of ice on the frozen Kapchagay reservoir outside Almaty, Kazakhstan

REUTERS

Trump's presidency not just a blip in US foreign policy

FROM EUROPE TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA, TRUMP'S BRAND OF TRANSACTIONAL DIPLOMACY HAS ALIENATED FRIENDS AND FOES ALIKE, LEAVING BIDEN WITH A PARTICULARLY CONTENTIOUS SET OF NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 16: President-elect Joe Biden's plan to scrap President Donald Trump's vision of "America First" in favour of "diplomacy first" will depend on whether he's able to regain the trust of allies and convince them that Trumpism is just a blip in the annals of US foreign policy.

It could be a hard sell. From Europe to the Middle East and Asia, Trump's brand of transactional diplomacy has alienated friends and foes alike, leaving Biden with a particularly contentious set of national security is-

sues. Biden, who said last month that "America's back, ready to lead the world, not retreat from it," might strive to be the antithesis of Trump on the world stage and reverse some, if not many, of his predecessor's actions. But Trump's imprint on America's place in the world — viewed as good or bad — will not be easily erased.

US allies aren't blind to the large constituency of American voters who continue to support Trump's nationalist tendencies and his belief that the United States should stay out of world conflicts. If Biden's goal is to restore America's place in the world, he'll not only need to gain the trust of foreign allies but also convince voters at home that international diplomacy works better than unilateral tough talk.

Trump has insisted that he's not against multilateralism, only global

institutions that are ineffective. He has pulled out of more than half a dozen international agreements, withdrawn from multiple UN Groups and trash talked allies and partners. Biden, on the other hand, says global alliances need to be rebuilt to combat climate change, address the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future epidemics and confront the growing threat posed by China. The national security and foreign policy staff that he has named so far are champions of multilateralism.

His choices for secretary of state, Antony Blinken, deputy secretary of state Wendy Sherman, national security adviser Jake Sullivan and foreign aid chief Samantha Power — all veterans of the Obama administration — underscore his intent to return to a foreign policy space that they believe was aban-

doned by Trump. "Right now, there's an enormous vacuum," Biden said. "We're going to have to regain the trust and confidence of a world that has begun to find ways to work around us or without us."

Biden intends to rejoin the Paris climate agreement and cooperate again with the World Health Organization. He plans to smooth relations with Europeans and other friends and refrain from blasting fellow members of NATO, and he may return the United States to the Iran nuclear agreement.

Still, many Americans will continue to espouse Trump's "America First" agenda, especially with the US Economy struggling to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, civil strife in American streets over racism and the absence of civil political discourse.

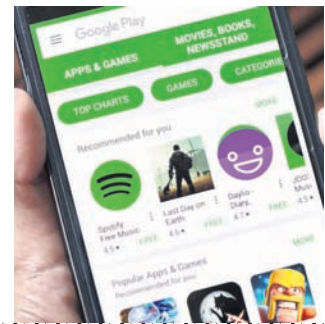




Our analysis confirms that the absence of managerial delegation is a significant factor in why successful Indian businesses fail to grow, which reduces the overall productivity of the country's economy
MICHAEL PETERS | RESEARCHER, YALE UNIVERSITY

'GOOGLE PLAY IS UNSPORTSMANLIKE'

State attorneys general are planning a third lawsuit against Alphabet Inc's Google, this one focused on the search and advertising giant's Play Store for Android phones, according to two sources familiar with the matter. The lawsuit is expected to be filed in February or March



of the day quote

We have partnered with the Oxford University vaccine project as one of the seven global institutions manufacturing the vaccine
ADAR POONAWALLA | CEO, SII

The development of an integrated subscription-based platform such as SEDP and Enterprise IT platform for Smart Metering plug and play for DISCOMs, will be crucial in actualising our vision of a reliable, secure and robust digital grid
K RAJARAMAN | ADDITIONAL SECY, INVESTMENTS, DEA

We are pleased to begin expansion of our domestic network beyond the pre-covid levels. This will also be our first destination amongst the seven regional stations we announced recently
SANJAY KUMAR | CHIEF STRATEGY & REVENUE OFFICER, INDIGO

'Need to support economic revival, financial stability'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Jan 16: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Saturday said the financial stability is a public good, and its resilience and robustness need to be preserved and nurtured by all stakeholders.

The central bank has directed its policy efforts to put in place a state-of-the-art national payments infrastructure, ensuring a safe, secure, efficient and cost-effective robust payments ecosystem, he further said.

He was making those comments while delivering the 39th Nani Palkhivala memorial lecture through a virtual platform on Saturday.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Das said, is positioning itself to provide an enabling environment where regulated entities are catalysed to exploit these new avenues while maintaining and preserving financial stability.

The governor said the central bank was open to look at any proposal for setting up a bad bank and would examine it before issuing any regulatory guidelines.

"Bad banks have been under discussion for a very long time. And I think you know we have in RBI provided regulatory guidelines for asset reconstruction companies. We are open to look at any proposal for setting up a bad bank," he said during a question and answer session.

Das said, "We are open and from



Bad banks have been under discussion for a very long time. And I think, we have, in RBI, provided regulatory guidelines for asset reconstruction companies
SHAKTIKANTA DAS | RBI GOVERNOR

a regulatory point of view, we are open in the sense that, if any proposal comes, we are open to examine it and give it regularly and issue guidelines. But then it is for the government and other private sector players to really plan for it." "As far as Reserve Bank is concerned, we try to keep our regulatory framework in sync with the requirements of the times, if there is a proposal, mark my words, if there is a proposal for setting up of a bad bank, RBI will examine and take a

view on that," he said.

In December 2020, Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj had said the government was exploring all options, including setting up of a bad bank, to improve the health of the country's banking sector.

The governor said the country's financial system was facing both challenging times and also new opportunities as India's economy returns to its full vitality.

"New vistas of financial intermediation leveraging on technology and new business models will emerge," he said.

With the exponential growth of digitisation and online commerce, Das said, the central bank directed its policy efforts to put in place a state-of-the-art national payments infrastructure ensuring a safe, secure, and robust payments ecosystem.

PCRA holds oil and gas conservation drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: With a view to create awareness among the consumers of fossil fuels, Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA), Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Saturday launched a month-long campaign, highlighting the adverse health and environmental impacts of increasing carbon footprints.

The event Saksham aims to create awareness among the people on need of oil and gas conservation. On the occasion, Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal delivered his message through virtual platform emphasising upon oil conservation. He urged all to develop



habit of optimal use of energy which subsequently will help in protecting the national economy, provide a healthy environment to human life, reduce import bill and sustain the ecosystem.

Chief General Manager of Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Odisha, Subhajit Ghosh elaborated on the activities planned to create awareness about oil and gas conservation in the state.

During this one month, Oil Industries and in association with PCRA will conduct training programmes for drivers on better driving habits to save fuel.

PM announces ₹1,000cr 'Startup India Seed Fund'

Addressing the 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit', Modi exuded confidence that the growth of startups will help in generating jobs and improving lives of people in the region

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday announced the launch of ₹1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas.

Addressing the 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit', Modi exuded confidence that the growth of startups will help in generating jobs and improving lives of people in the region.

He said India has taken several steps to ensure that the country's startups do not face shortage of capital. "I am making another important announcement today in this programme. In order to provide initial capital for startups, the nation is launching a ₹1,000 crore Startup India Seed Fund. This will help in setting up new startups and promote their growth," the Prime Minister said.

The summit, which witnessed participation from BIMSTEC members also, marked the fifth anniversary of the Startup India ini-



tiative launched by Modi on this day in 2016.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organisation comprising seven member states including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand besides India.

Fund of funds scheme is already helping startups in raising equity capital, he said, and added the government will also help the startups in fundraising through guarantees.

India is working for a startup ecosystem based on the mantra "Of the Youth, By the Youth, For the Youth", he said.

"We have to fix our goals for the next five years and these goals should be that our startups, our unicorns should emerge as global giants and lead in the futuristic technologies," he said.

Observing that at present, India is among the countries having the biggest ecosystems for startups globally, the Prime Minister said: "Today over 41,000 startups in the country are engaged in some campaign or the other. Out of these, over 5,700 are in the IT sector, over 3,600 startups are in the health sector, and nearly 1,700 startups are in the agriculture sector."

SHORT TAKES

Wipro completes ₹9K cr buyback

New Delhi: IT services major Wipro Saturday said it has completed its ₹9,500-crore share buyback programme. The buyback saw Azim Premji-affiliated entities tendering 22.89 crore shares worth about ₹9,156 crore during the process, a regulatory filing said. "(A total of) 23.75 crore equity shares were bought back under the buyback at a price of ₹400 per equity share...The total amount utilised in the buyback is ₹9,500 crore," it added.

HDFC's Q3 profit rises 14.36%

Mumbai: The country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank Saturday reported a 14.36% jump in consolidated net profit to ₹8,760 crore for the December quarter, driven by a surge in core income. At the standalone level, net profit for the three-month period grew 18.09% to ₹8,758.29 crore, on the back of a 15.1% growth in the core net interest income at ₹16,317 crore. Its deposits grew 19.1% and the share of low-cost current and savings account deposits was 43%.

IntelliSmart inks pact with Infy

New Delhi: IntelliSmart has signed an agreement with Infosys to develop a digital platform for value-added services of discoms. IntelliSmart Infrastructure Private Limited (IntelliSmart), a joint venture of Energy Efficiency Services Ltd and National Investment & Infrastructure Fund, has committed to developing a digital platform for value-added services, according to a statement. IntelliSmart signed a MoU with Infosys Ltd to develop a "Sustainable Energy Digital Platform" to accelerate digitalisation and integrate data analytics across the power sector, enabling greater efficiency.

ATF price up 3%

New Delhi: Jet fuel or ATF price Saturday was hiked by 3% - the fourth increase in two months on firming international oil prices, while petrol and diesel rates remained unchanged after hitting new highs. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was raised by ₹1,512.38 per kilolitre, or 2.96 per cent, to ₹52,491.16 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This is the fourth increase in price since December 1, 2020.

BIZ BUZZ

Itel launches Vision 1 PRO

Bhubaneswar: After witnessing massive success and acceptance with Vision 1 - its first HD+ Waterdrop display smartphone in Feb 2020, itel announced the launch of another innovative and next gen smartphone christened Vision 1 PRO. New model is available with bigger screen 6.52inchHD+ Waterdrop display bundled with trendy features like Triple AI Camera, multi-functional fingerprint sensor and face unlock for its discerning customers in India. It is also equipped with 16.56 cm (6.52 inch) HD+ IPS Waterdrop Incell Display with 20:9 aspect ratio, 4000mAh Li-Polymer battery and 2GB RAM + 32GB ROM for customers. The latest phone is priced at ₹6599. Arijet Talapatra, CEO of TRANSSION India said that the company is highly optimistic that Vision 1 PRO will set new benchmarks in the sub of ₹7,000 budget segment as it comes equipped with superior and trendy features, packed at an affordable price of ₹6,599.

V Guard inaugurates 2 schools in Puri

Bhubaneswar: V Guard Industries Ltd inaugurated two schools building in Puri district under V Guard CSR project with help of World Vision India. One building was set up at Kalyanpur Nodal Upper Primary School, Delang and other is Khetra Pal primary school inaugurated at Malati Patapur. Both schools inaugurated in the presence of Sumanta Kumar Pradhan, Branch Manager of V Guard Industries Ltd, BEO, Delanga. Sarapanch of both the areas Niranjana Patra and Asst. Director of World Vision India Indho and other schools staff were present at the inaugural ceremony. It was said that around ₹36 lakh was invested to set up two schools.

US industrial production jumps 1.6% in Dec

Silver Spring: US Industrial production rose 1.6% in December, a third straight monthly gain, but remains below its pre-pandemic level. The December gain in industrial output followed a 0.5% increase in November and a 1% increase in October, the Federal Reserve reported Friday. Even with those gains, industrial output is still about 3.3% below its level in February before the pandemic hit. Manufacturing increased 0.9%, its eighth straight monthly gain, even as production of motor vehicles and parts declined 1.6%. That follows a string of gains for the auto sector, including last month's strong 5per cent increase. Without the drag in the auto sector last month, manufacturing posted gains of 1.1%. Mining production rose 1.6%, while utilities' output rose 6.2% as a rebound in December demand followed a 4.2% decline in November due to unseasonably warm weather.

Adani Group rebuts allegations, says no loan to it turned NPA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 16: Adani Group Saturday rebutted allegations of not paying bank loans saying it maintains an impeccable record of not a single NPA in three decades of its existence.

In a statement on Twitter, the ports-to-energy conglomerate said it has built stellar infrastructure assets in the nation adopting prudent corporate governance and capital management processes that have



consistently enhanced credit quality. "The group maintains an impeccable record of not a single NPA in the three decades of its existence," it said responding to a tweet by BJP MP Subramanian Swamy. Swamy had Friday tweeted on

dues of Adani.

"Trapeze Artist Adani now owes ₹4.5 lakh crores as NPA to banks. Correct me if I am wrong. Yet his wealth is doubling every two years since 2016. Why can't he repay the banks? Maybe like with the six airports he has bought he might soon buy out all the banks he owes money," he had said in a Twitter post.

Adani Saturday called the number quoted in the tweet as "incorrect and fictitious number." "Aligned to our core philosophy

of nation-building, the Adani Group has built stellar infrastructure assets mitigating critical demand gaps in India," it said. "Given our prudent corporate governance framework and capital management processes, our credit quality has consistently enhanced and the net debt to EBITDA ratio is less than 4, which demonstrates high credit ratings quality and almost all of our businesses enjoy a high credit rating from international and domestic rating agencies."

GENERAL MOTORS TO INVEST \$785mn IN CANADA PLANT

REUTERS

Detroit, Jan 16: General Motors Co and labour union Unifor has said they have reached a tentative deal for the automaker to invest nearly C\$1 billion (\$785.42 million) in its CAMI Assembly Plant in Ingersoll, Ontario, to manufacture commercial electric vans.

Under the tentative deal, which is yet to be ratified by the union workers, GM has agreed to begin large-scale commercial production of EV600, an electric van, at its CAMI plant, Unifor said in a statement. The Detroit automaker said in a separate statement that work would

MANUFACTURING ELECTRIC VANS

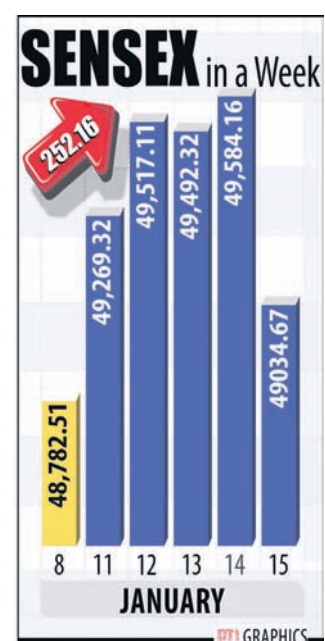


begin immediately at the plant. The new deal builds upon recent investments by GM in Canada, which in November had agreed to invest C\$1 billion in its Oshawa plant to expand production of its full-size pickup trucks. The Canadian government wel-

comed the deal and said it would confirm its support as soon as the union members ratified the deal.

"We await the results of the ratification vote," Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne said in a statement.

Unifor, the union representing hourly workers in Canada, said more details of the deal would be presented to local members of the union at an online ratification meeting scheduled for January 17, the results of which are scheduled to be released a day later.



'India needs to build hardware capabilities in digital era'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 16: India, with its proven software prowess, now needs to aggressively build strong hardware capabilities as well, given the crucial role that hardware technologies play in handling and management of data in digital age, chairperson of Parliamentary Committee on Data Protection Bill and BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi said Saturday. Lekhi noted that exponential rate at which data is being collected and consumed, and advent of new technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things and cloud computing have created an urgent need and legislative rigour for comprehensive framework on data protection.

Manipulation and "deception" in communication and data man-

agement can severely undermine democratic values and subvert the process of free and fair elections, she said and added that the proposed data protection legislation - in the works - is particularly relevant in the times of digital "stealth wars".

"Your thought and data can be shared with someone else without you knowing about it. Algorithms could be collecting data that you probably never consented for...So deception in communication and data management and deception in manner of working is going to cause a damage to democracies, and it will be basically challenging the supremacy of free and fair elections, and thus we need to have some method of controlling this kind of...Situation," Lekhi said addressing a session on data privacy at SKOCH Summit.



It is pertinent to mention here that parliamentary committee examining the Personal Data Protection Bill has recommended 89 amendments to the proposed legislation, including changing its title and schedule.

The draft of the bill, approved by

the Cabinet in December 2019, proposes to put restriction on use of personal data without explicit consent of citizens. Overall, it aims at safeguarding personal information, defining obligations of data processors as also rights of individuals, and proposes penalties for violation.

When you look around the systems, you see that we are dealing with an unfair system. Unfair not just in India but globally, there is lot of intellectual property theft which is going on right now stealthily, which people may not even know about
MEENAKSHI LEKHI | CHAIRPERSON, PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON DATA PROTECTION BILL

The bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha, and later it was referred to the Joint Committee of Parliament headed by BJP MP Lekhi.

Speaking at the data privacy ses-

sion Saturday, Lekhi said there are many who are unaware of the kinds of warring systems that exist in the digital ecosystem today.

"When you look around the systems, you see that we are dealing with an unfair system. Unfair not just in India but globally, there is lot of intellectual property theft which is going on right now stealthily, which people may not even know about," she said. India has proved its expertise in field of software, and the industry now needs to turn its attention to hardware side of the business too, she said.

"We have done very well in software, but I think in hardware, technology and manufacture. No data can be transferred unless there is a hardware which is transmitting it and there we are missing out," she said.

ROHIT'S DISMISSAL PUTS INDIA IN A SPOT OF BOTHER, HOWEVER AUSSIES FACE RACE AGAINST TIME AFTER RAIN PLAYS SPOILSPORT

INDIA ON BACKFOOT



Pat Cummins reacts after getting the wicket of India opener Shubman Gill at the Gabba, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Jan 16: Rohit Sharma's indiscreet shot selection pegged India back after rookie bowling at attack restricted Australia to 369 on a rain-curtailed second day of the fourth Test Saturday.

With heavy thundershowers preventing any play in the post tea session, India ended the day at 62 for two. Rohit was elegant as ever in his 44 off 74 balls before Nathan Lyon in his 100th Test enticed him to come down the track but the half-chip-half-loft was safely pouched by Mitchell Starc in the deep.

India also lost Shubman Gill (7) who edged one off Pat Cummins to Steve Smith. Cheteshwar Pujara (8 batting) and Ajinkya Rahane (2 batting) added only two runs in the 6.1 overs before the break.

There were six boundaries from Rohit but he did not fiddle at deliveries in and around the off-stump channel even as Cummins and Josh Hazlewood bowled a testing spell under overcast conditions.

The shot of the session was an on-drive off Cummins which came after a streaky boundary through the slips in the same over. Another delightful stroke was an off-drive off

Cameron Green as 49 runs were added for the second wicket.

There wasn't much swing on offer but the pace off the track has increased compared to the first day and it only helped that the Australian pace attack is a more well built one with average speed being at least 6-7 kmph more than their Indian counterparts. Pujara, at the other end was playing his usual 'grinding out' game but it didn't look too arduous till Rohit kept the scoreboard ticking at the other end.

It wouldn't be an over statement to say that among all top order batsman across both sides, Rohit looked the most comfortable and till his dismissal never looked like being troubled by the four-pronged attack.

However as has been his wont in SENA countries, Rohit just before the tea break went after Lyon when the situation demanded that he could have played for session-end. It was very similar to his dismissal off Moeen Ali at the stroke of tea during the 2014 series and that was also after being set in the middle-order.

India, who have been forced to field a depleted side won't mind an inclement weather which effectively makes the home team more jittery as a draw would be enough

for Rahane to lift the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

In the first session, India's rookie bowling line-up did put up a lion-hearted effort, getting the last five wickets for 95 runs.

Shardul Thakur (3/94) along with debutants Washington Sundar (3/89) and Thangarasu Natarajan (3/78) got the breakthroughs while Mohammed Siraj (1/77) got one on the opening day.

For an attack as thin on experience as India, the effort in adverse times can only be commended. India lost five main bowlers through the three Test matches and were forced to hand Test debuts to Natarajan and Washington.

Nathan Lyon (24) and Mitchell Starc (20 n o) counter-attacked the inexperienced Indian attack with a brisk 39-run partnership to take Australia past 350-run mark. Going by statistics, Australia have never lost a Test match at the Gabba after scoring 350 in the first innings.

Resuming at 274/5, Tim Paine (50) and Cameron Green (47) extended their stand to 98 before the home team encountered a mini-collapse.

Thakur bowled a fuller delivery that shaped away and Paine's lazy drive without going to the pitch of the delivery saw Rohit take a regulation catch at the second slip.

Paine was just getting into the groove with some good drives when Thakur provided the breakthrough. With the partnership broken, Green probably lost his concentration as he played for the turn to an angle delivery from Sundar which straightened after pitching and breached through his defences.

Cummins (2) was adjudged leg before as he yorked himself to a fuller delivery from Thakur as Australia slumped from 311/5 to 315/8 before the tail wagged once again to beef up the total.



SCORECARD

AUSTRALIA 1ST INNINGS
(overnight 274/5)

Cameron Green b Sundar 47, Tim Paine c Rohit b Thakur 50, Pat Cummins lbw b Thakur 2, Mitchell Starc not out 20, Nathan Lyon b Sundar 24, Josh Hazlewood b Natarajan 11;
Extras: 20 (b-4, lb-5, nb-6, w-5);
Total: 369 all out (115.2 overs).

Fall: 1/4 (Warner), 2/17 (Harris), 3/87 (Smith), 4/200 (Wade), 5/213 (Labuschagne), 6/311 (Paine), 7/313 (Green), 8/315 (Cummins), 9/354 (Lyon), 10/369 (Hazlewood).

Bowlers: Mohammed Siraj 25-10-66-1, T Natarajan 24.2-3-78-3, Shardul Thakur 24-6-93-3, Navdeep Saini 7.5-2-21-0, Washington Sundar 31-6-89-3, Rohit Sharma 0.1-0-1-0.

INDIA 1ST INNINGS

Rohit Sharma c Starc b Lyon 44, Shubman Gill c Smith b Cummins 7, Cheteshwar Pujara batting 8, Ajinkya Rahane batting 2; **Extras:** 1 (nb-1); **Total: 62/2 (26 overs).**

Fall: 1/11 (Gill), 2/60 (Rohit).
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 3-1-8-0, Josh Hazlewood 8-4-11-0, Pat Cummins 6-1-22-1, Cameron Green 3-0-11-0, Nathan Lyon 6-2-10-1.

Post Day 2 play reactions

ROHIT SHARMA

Reckless shot-play: You always have a plan and I actually have no regret of playing that shot. It is something that I always like to do – put pressure on bowlers. Nathan Lyon is a smart bowler and he bowled into me which made it difficult for me to get some elevation. It's not that it is (that shot) coming out of nowhere. It's a shot that I have played well in the past. That's something that I back myself to play and that's the kind of role I play in this team. When it looks like that, it looks bad, but I don't think too much as my focus is to make it count once I am in. Having said that, there is a process I like to follow. Sometimes you get out and sometimes it goes over the ropes. Unfortunate and sad dismissal in the end to be honest. Like I said, those are my shots and I will keep playing them.

Technical adjustments: In Sydney, there wasn't much bounce, so I was staying on leg stump of the ball and here I knew the line and lengths particularly of the two right handers (Cummins and Hazlewood), they try and test you outside the off-stump all the time. So, here, I came a little bit on the off-stump to make sure that I cover the line and don't push my hands outside the off-stump. That's the little adjustment that I did.

Indian batting: We have got solid batters to come in now. Two of the most experienced players are still out there in the middle. The pitch is good and I don't see any reason why we can't get to that total (Australia's 369) of first innings.

Suggestion to teammates: We should focus on what's there in front of us rather than thinking too far ahead. It's a big score and we have to focus on sessions, take it as it comes. The pitch is playing good and we have to back ourselves. We have the guys to do it and I don't see why we can bat well on day three.

On Natarajan: Natarajan bowled pretty well, to be honest. Playing outside the country (internationals) for the first time and bowling to such batsmen, it wasn't going to be easy and he was not under any pressure. From ball one, he was right up there. He showed a lot of composure, is a strong character who doesn't speak much but we all know he has a solid personality. He wants to do well for the team and also for himself. He is here to stay.

Backing rookie bowlers: Most of these guys are playing first time in Australia. Siraj has played a couple of games and Saini played in Sydney. Obviously, there's not a lot of experience there. They showed a lot of discipline and overall if I had to analyse the performance of these bowlers, I would say they bowled pretty well. It's a good pitch still. This is a great experience for them bowling against the best batters, and test themselves.

ANDREW McDONALD (Oz's asst. coach)

Praising Sundar: I thought they (the Indian bowlers) were very consistent. I thought Washington Sundar in particular was disciplined and fill that role of Ravi Ashwin quite well and kept it tight and was able to take some key wickets on the way. So, for me I suppose, he is a bowler who controlled well the tempo of the game and I think it stood out for me.

Impressed with Natarajan: Natarajan shaped the ball early, there is lot (to like) about him, left-arm swing bowler, no doubt he is inexperienced but has enough played first-class games to be play his first Test on this tour, (that) is a great achievement, so I think they held their own.

Rohit's dismissal: India 2/60, to get (Rohit) Sharma just before the or what was to be the end of the play was very handy. But we had 100 runs today, could that have been more possibly, but in saying that 350 plus at the first innings at the Gabba is not a bad score.

Indian fan complains of racism at SCG

SYDNEY: Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) officials have launched an investigation after an Indian supporter alleged that he was subjected to racial profiling and abuse by a security officer during the final day of the third Test against Australia.

The incident took place after Indian fast bowler Mohammed Siraj was allegedly racially abused by spectators on the third and fourth day of the drawn Test at SCG.

Sydney resident Krishna Kumar met Venues NSW legal personnel Thursday to lodge an official complaint, accusing the security at the venue of racial profiling and unjustified frisking.

He informed the authorities that he felt 'stripped and naked' by his treatment on the final day of the third Test (January 11), says a report in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'.

Kumar, who attended three days' play of the third Test, told Venues NSW that he was targeted after trying to carry four banners reading: 'Rivalry is good, racism is not', 'No racism mate', 'Brown inclusion matters' and 'Cricket Australia more diversity please'.

A security officer stopped Kumar, informing him that one of the banners exceeded the permitted dimensions. When he requested to speak to a security supervisor, Kumar was asked to leave.

"He told me, 'If you need to address this matter, go back to where you belong,'" Kumar said. "It was a very small banner. I made it out of my kids' paper roll," he added.

Kumar said the official then told the junior guards to 'make sure we give him a complete frisking when he gets back'.

He went out to empty his bag in his car. However, on return he was subjected to a lengthy check and was shouted at aggressively. He was also ordered through a metal detector.

More security was added to the section he was seated in, including a female guard of Indian origin, to monitor if he was 'using any other language'.

"To me this was a pure case of profiling. They changed their entire formation so the guy next to the boundary is standing right in front of me and facing me," Kumar said.

"I want justice. I want accountability I was feeling stripped, feeling watched and I went there to fight racism. Why should I be stopped from addressing racism, especially at a ground where it was debatable whether it was happening or not?" he added.

Dhada takes hat-trick as Odisha Orange win

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: Bhabani Dhada (3/0) bagged a hat-trick to help Odisha Orange a comprehensive 133-run victory over Odisha Green in their match of the OCA Women's Cricket League 50-over tournament at the Vikash Cricket Stadium here, Saturday.

Chasing a target of 176, the Green were bowled out for a paltry 42 in just 16.3 overs. Dhada dismissed the last three wickets in her first over's opening three balls to complete the win for the Green. Credit also goes to Rameswari Naik (5/18) who bagged a five-wicket haul. Kuni Badara (21) was the top scorer for the losing side.

Earlier, the Orange had managed to post 175/8 in their 50 overs after being invited to bat first by the Green. Sarita Meher (49), Sunita Murmu (44) and skipper Rasanara Parwin (24) batted well to guide the Orange to a respectable total. DJ Reddy (2/29) and Kalpana Nayak (2/35) bowled well for the Green.

In other matches, skipper Sushree Dibyadarshini (63) led from the front to help Odisha Violet eke out a narrow one-wicket win over Odisha Red, while Odisha Yellow bowlers helped their side beat Odisha Purple.

At the Mula Padia, Dibyadarshini was star with the bat for the Violet as they chased down a target of 178 in 47.2 overs losing nine wickets in the process. Banalata Mallick (2/25) was the most effective bowler for the Red.

Odisha Red had posted 177/8 in their 50 overs after opting to bat. Silpa Swain (50 n o) was brilliant with the bat and she was ably supported by her skipper Madhuri



BHABANI DHADA

Meheta (37), Sangeeta Khadia (2/36) bowled well for the Violet.

At the KIIT Cricket Stadium, Priyanka P Sahu (3/7) led the bowling attack to help Odisha Yellow script a 57-run win over Odisha Purple. Priyanka was ably supported by Nistha Dutta (3/27), Tarama Pradhan (2/15) and GM Alakananda (2/21).

Chasing 182, the Purple were bowled out for 124. Alipsa Biswal (34) and skipper Madhusmita Behera (29) were the only one to show some resistance for the losing side. Earlier, the Yellow posted 181/9, courtesy Anjali Singh (40) and Tarama (26 n o). Rani K Prasad (3/27), Laxmipriya Naik (3/40) and Madhusmita (2/19) were standout among the Purple bowlers.

Pandya brothers' father dies, Krunal leaves bio-bubble

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vadodara, Jan 16: India cricketers Hardik and Krunal Pandya lost their father Himanshu, who died Saturday after suffering a heart attack. He was 71.

Krunal, who was leading Baroda in the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy, left the bio-bubble created for the tournament to be with his family, association secretary Ajit Lele told this agency.

Hardik is not playing the national T20 tournament as he is preparing for the white-ball series against England. He has also left Mumbai, where he was training, for Vadodara. Himanshu had played a key role in the success of his cricketer sons.

India skipper Virat Kohli and legendary Sachin Tendulkar, led the cricketing fraternity in condoling Himanshu's demise.

Thirimanne helps SL cut lead

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Galle (Sri Lanka), Jan 16: Lahiru Thirimanne led Sri Lanka's gallant fightback to cut England's lead to 130 after captain Joe Root hit his fourth double century in Tests on the third day of the first Test, Saturday.

Root's 228 had provided England a strong total of 421 and a meaningful first innings lead of 286, but Thirimanne stood firm for two sessions to remain unbeaten on 76 off 189 balls and carried Sri Lanka to 156/2 at stumps.

Thirimanne's patient knock which included six boundaries was in sharp contrast to Sri Lanka's first innings effort when the whole team was rattled for 135 in two sessions on the first day.

England had an opportunity to remove Thirimanne soon after the left-hander had completed his half century, but Dom Sibley spilled a two-handed catch at gully.

Thirimanne and Kusal Perera



Lahiru Thirimanne sweeps one on the leg-side

started a steady fightback with their 101-run opening wicket stand as they thwarted the spin threat of Jack Leach and Dom Bess on a turning wicket.

Perera shelved his stroke-making in scoring 62 off 109 balls and even batted with a strapped hand after he was struck by Mark Wood's short pitch delivery in the middle session before England struck twice after tea.

Perera threw away his wicket early in the last session when he played a rash shot off Sam Curran's

wayward delivery and holed out in the deep. Kusal Mendis labored for 65 deliveries in scoring 15 runs, but added 54 runs with Thirimanne to defy England's hopes of making inroads.

Leach finally struck in the penultimate over of the day when he found the thin edge of Mendis' bat to provide England some relief.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 135 & 156/2 (Lahiru Thirimanne 76 batting, Kusal Perera 62); England 421 (Joe Root 228, Dilruwan Perera 4/109). Match to continue.

IFPEFSSA award for KIIT sports director Dash

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 16: Dr. Gaganendu Dash, Director Sports, KIIT University was conferred with the prestigious IFPEFSSA International Sports Administrator Award 2020 for promotion and organisation of sports in the International & University level.

Dash received this award virtually during a function organised at Osmania University, Hyderabad. The Award instituted by International Federation of Physical Fitness and Sports Science Association (IFPEFSSA), India.

KIIT University has organised many int'l and nat'l sports events including 1st Khelo India University Games 2020. It has also promoted many sportspersons like Dutee Chand, Amiya Mallick, Purnima Hembram, Jauna Murmu, etc and working at grassroots level.

Mumbai City, Hyderabad play out goalless draw

AGENCIES

Goa, Jan 16: The ISL clash between Mumbai City FC and Hyderabad FC at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim ended in a goalless draw as both teams failed to break the deadlock.

It was a positive result for the Nizams as they bagged a point against the league leaders. The Islanders, however, now are unbeaten in five matches in a row to remain on top while Hyderabad saw themselves on the fourth position after the draw.

Mumbai City started the game on a positive note as they controlled the play to build up the game. Hyderabad



Amrinder Singh makes a save off Joel Chianese in the first half

FC looked to attack on the counter through the flanks with Akash Mishra playing an important role in the defense and with his runs. The Islanders had most shots on target but were denied to score as the Nizams saw off the danger on all occasions.

In the 12th minute, Mumbai City made a brilliant build up play to find Bipin Singh in front of the goal as he single handedly looked to take on the defender and moved inside the box but a last-ditch defense from Asish Rai kept the danger out.

Hyderabad slowly got into the game and in the 32nd minute they were denied a wonderful goal by Mumbai City custodian Amrinder

Singh. It was a clever ball from Mohammad Yasir from the flank to find Chianese in front of the goal as he went one on one with the goalkeeper but Amrinder made himself big to see off the danger.

Amrinder almost turned villain three minutes into the second half as he made a sloppy clearance. He passed the ball straight to Liston Colaco who went for a shot, from outside the box, but the ball went just wide off the post.

In a late drama in the 87th, an end to end football was on display as Colaco went for a shot from inside the box but Amrinder held on to the ball quite easily to deny Hyderabad a win.