



AT RECEIVING END

Twitter account of actor Kangana Ranaut has been restricted temporarily over Tandav controversy

LEISURE P2



FARMERS AWAIT CENTRAL AID

Over 12,000 farmers under Rasulpur block have been deprived of the benefits under Pradhan Mantri Krushak Yojana

STATE P5



CHINA MUM

China has remained silent on why its top leaders are yet to take vax jab

INTERNATIONAL P10

Farm laws: Govt climbs down

GOVT OFFERS TO PUT ON HOLD THREE FARM LAWS FOR 1-1.5 YEARS TO END IMPASSE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 20: Yielding some ground to end the nearly two-month-long protests by thousands of farmers on the national capital borders, the government Wednesday proposed to suspend the three contentious farm laws for 1-1.5 years and set up a joint committee to find an amicable solution in the interest of the farming community.

During their tenth round of negotiations with three central ministers, the two sides decided to meet again Friday after the union leaders hold their own internal consultations Thursday to decide on the government's new proposal. Briefing media after a nearly five-hour-long meeting that included two breaks, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the government has proposed to suspend implementation of the three laws for 1-1.5 years, during which period a joint committee of representatives from the government and farmers' sides can continue their talks and those protesting on Delhi borders in extremely cold weather return to their homes.

The three laws have already been stayed by the Supreme Court till further orders and a committee of experts has been formed to resolve the deadlock. The panel has been asked by the apex court to submit its report within two months after consulting all stakeholders.

SC irked over barbs at 4-member panel

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Wednesday expressed strong displeasure over the aspersions cast by some farmers' unions on members of the court-appointed committee to resolve the impasse over new farm laws, saying no adjudicating authority has been given to the experts who would hear grievances and give report only. Meanwhile, the hopes of Delhi Police to get a judicial order to stop the proposed tractor rally by the protesting farmers on the Republic Day in the national capital were dashed as the top court asked the Centre to withdraw the plea.

The committee held its first meeting Tuesday and will begin its consultations with farmer groups and others from Thursday. After the meeting, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said, "The government proposed to suspend the farm laws for one and a half years. We rejected the proposal but since it has come from the government, we will meet tomorrow and deliberate over it."



Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar (C) along with Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal (L) and Minister of State Som Prakash addresses media after the 10th round of meeting with farmer leaders at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, Wednesday

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Cash, card or kidney?

MA BACK WITH ONLINE VIDEO

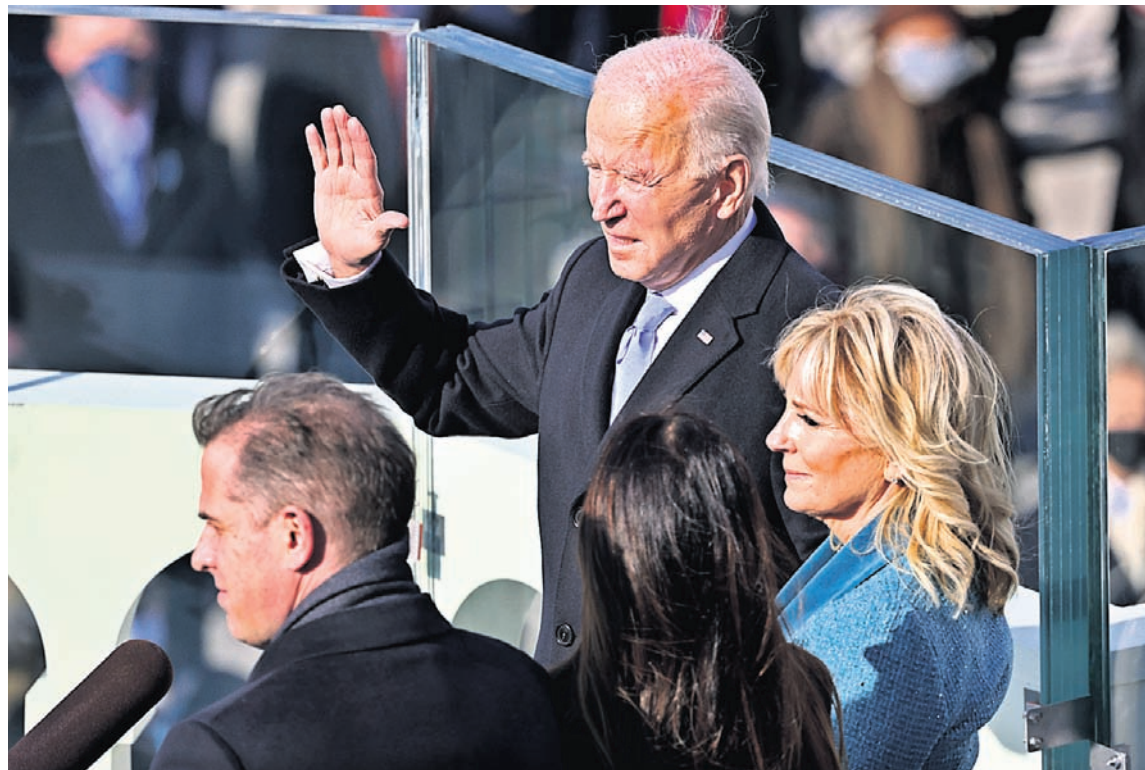
AGENCIES

Beijing, Jan 20: China's highest-profile entrepreneur, Jack Ma, appeared Wednesday in an online video, ending a 2 1/2-months absence from public view that prompted speculation about the future of the e-commerce billionaire and his Alibaba Group.

In the 50-second video, Ma congratulated teachers supported by his foundation and made no mention of his disappearance or official efforts to tighten control over Alibaba and other internet companies over the past six months. The video appeared on Chinese business news and other websites. The normally voluble Ma disappeared from public view after he irked regulators by criticising them in an October 24 speech at a Shanghai conference. Days later, regulators suspended the planned multibillion-dollar stock market debut of Ant Group, a financial platform that grew out of Alibaba's payments service, Alipay.

That prompted speculation online about whether the 56-year-old Ma, China's biggest global business celebrity and a symbol of its tech boom, had been detained or might face legal trouble. Alibaba and the government haven't responded to questions about him. The Jack Ma Foundation said in a statement Wednesday: "Jack Ma participated in the online ceremony of the annual Rural Teacher Initiative event January 20."

BIDEN PRESIDENCY BEGINS



Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th President of the United States by Chief Justice John Roberts as Jill Biden holds the bible during the 59th Presidential Inauguration at the US Capitol in Washington, Wednesday

State cuts school tuition fees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: In a major relief for students and their guardians, the state government has announced reduction of tuition fees in all aided and unaided private schools for the 2020-2021 academic session in wake of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Private schools have been asked to waive fees as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) entered September 10 last year.

The School and Mass Education Department in a notification issued Tuesday said that the tuition fee reduction will be made in seven different slabs. While there will be no waiver for schools charging ₹6,000 per annum, those charging between ₹6,001 to ₹12,001 will reduce the tuition fee by 7.5 per cent.

Twelve per cent reduction for tuition fees between ₹12,001 and ₹24,000 annually, 15 per cent for fees between ₹24,001



to ₹48,000, 20 per cent for school tuition fees of ₹48,001 to ₹72,000, 25 per cent for ₹72,001 to ₹1 lakh fees and 26 per cent for fees above ₹1 lakh per annum, the notification said.

This apart, schools cannot charge students for food and transport. However, a 30 per cent waiver will be given on hostel fees, the notification said.

The state government action came based on a High Court directive which asked the government to reduce the fees in all aided and unaided private schools

for the 2020-21 academic session in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We hope that the aided and unaided private schools will abide by the court order," School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash told reporters.

Earlier, several parents' associations had gone to the High Court after the state government and the schools refused to reduce the fees even as schools remained closed due to the pandemic. Responding to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), the state government had informed the High Court that it had no power to regulate fees fixed by private schools.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had earlier this month announced waiver of examination fees of Class 10 students, who would appear at the board examinations in 2021. The decision would benefit six lakh students. The government would bear ₹27 crore towards the exemption, Patnaik had said in a statement.

'Our challenge is to tackle both China, Pak at same time'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Ahead of assuming charge as the next vice-chief of the Indian Army, Lt General Chandni Prasad Mohanty Wednesday said the force needs modernisation and further augmentation of its capability to simultaneously deal with threats from China and Pakistan.

Lt Gen Mohanty, who is currently the Southern Command chief, will take over from Lt Gen SK Saini after he retires January 31. Attending a function at Sainik School here, Mohanty said, "As of now, the major challenge before the Indian Army is to tackle both China and Pakistan at one time in the borders."

"Therefore, we have to expedite modernisation, achieve technological advancement and keep vigil on both the fronts simultaneously. For that reason, we have to do capability development, infrastructure development, procure better weapon systems and better communications."

Noting that nature of battlefields across the globe is changing fast, Mohanty said, one needs to constantly undertake modernisation



works. "Nowadays, we in the Indian Army, Indian Navy or the Indian Air-force, are not giving stress on expanding in terms of numbers, but emphasis is being given on infrastructure development and modernisation," he said.

After taking charge as the vice-chief of India Army, Lt General Mohanty's prime responsibility will be to carry forward modernisation and capability development of the force, he said.

"China is modernising in a big way and also assisting Pakistan to modernise in a big way. We are also carrying out a lot of modernisation and capability enhancement. What is most important is that we are getting tremendous support from our Prime Minister and Defence Minister," Mohanty said.

Mohanty appealed to Odia youths to join the defence force and make the state proud.

GOVT RAISES BUS FARES WB: 14 of wedding party killed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: With the steep hike in diesel prices, the state government Wednesday increased the fare of all categories of passenger buses.

As per a notification issued by the State Transport Authority (STA), the fares of ordinary and express buses have been increased by 1 paise/km while the fare of deluxe and AC deluxe buses went up by 2 paise per km. However, there will be no hike in the fare of city buses playing in the state.

"Due to increase in diesel price from ₹80.42 as on 07.12.2020 to ₹82.11 as on 20.01.2021, leading to price increased by an amount equal to ₹1.69 in direct and ₹3 in cumulative



(including the carryover), the fare for stage carriages other than town buses plying within Odisha shall be fixed at increased rates," the STA said.

With the latest rise, the fare of ordinary buses has gone up to 74 paise/km while commuters will have to pay 77 paise per km for traveling on express buses, 109 paise per km for deluxe service buses and 131 paise per km for AC deluxe buses.

AGENCIES

Jalpaiguri (WB), Jan 20: Fourteen members, including four children, of a marriage party were killed and 10 others injured due to a collision between a stone-laden truck and their three vehicles in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district, police said Wednesday.

The accident occurred in Jaldhaka area in Dhupguri block on Tuesday night, they said. The cars of the marriage party were going towards Dhupguri on the wrong side of the road and the collision took place due to dense fog, a senior police officer said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced an ex gratia of ₹2.5 lakh



each to the next of kin of those who were killed in the accident. The state government will provide ₹50,000 each to those who were seriously injured, she said at a programme in Purulia.

Banerjee also said ₹25,000 would be given to those whose injuries are not serious. "The loss cannot be compensated. But we would like

to tell the families that the government is with them. We are providing compensation to the next of kin of the deceased and the injured persons. Our local MLA Sourav Chakraborty is already there and state minister Aroop Biswas is rushing to the spot," Banerjee said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was extremely anguished over the road accident and announced an ex gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the incident. He also said that ₹50,000 each would be given to those injured, according to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Ten injured people are undergoing treatment in Jalpaiguri Super Speciality Hospital, the police officer said.

Hassle-free darshan of Trinity from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Wednesday said from Thursday devotees would not require to furnish the Covid-19 negative reports to enter the temple premises.

SJTA Chief Administrator Krishan Kumar said a few changes would come into effect from Thursday and they include entry to the temple without the mandatory Covid-19 negative certificates. He also assured people that adequate arrangements have been made in the temple city for the pilgrims.

State law minister Pratap Jena claimed from Thursday onwards darshan of the Trinity would be hassle free. "From Thursday onwards, the darshan of the Trinity



is going to be hassle free as the mandatory requirement of furnishing a Covid-19 negative certificate has been done away with. Arrangements have been made to ensure that a total of 30,000 devotees

can have darshan on a single day." The SJTA on the eve of Thursday said all possible civic amenities have been reviewed and arrangements made accordingly. Kumar said keeping in view clear skies

and escalating hot afternoons, arrangements have been made to facilitate smooth entry of devotees.

"We have made adequate arrangements for devotees to have darshan of the Trinity from Thursday. We

have arranged adequate drinking water, sanitiser and other amenities. We had a meeting today with the concerned officials to chalk out the action plan. In Badadanda, arrangements have been made for drinking water for 24 hours on both sides of the road," the SJTA Chief Administrator said.

Kumar also said that the temple administration would keep the temple premises closed for Sunday for sanitisation purpose. He also said that the timing for the darshan has been amended too from Thursday.

"For the residents of Puri, they can have darshan from 6 am to 7 am and for the general public, the gates will open from 7 am. We have arranged two LED screens for better information to the devotees," he said. Till now, the temples gates used to open from 8 am.

MARKET WATCH

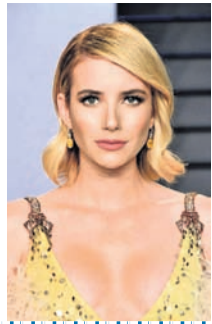
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	49792.12 ↑ 393.83
NIFTY	14644.70 ↑ 123.50
DOLLAR	73.57 ↓ ₹0.13
EURO	88.30 ↓ ₹0.44
GOLD	₹49,376 ↑ ₹393
SILVER	₹66,401 ↑ ₹365

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	32.8°C	32°C
MIN	18.6°C	17.2°C
Humidity	86%	82%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Fog or mist in the morning

leisure

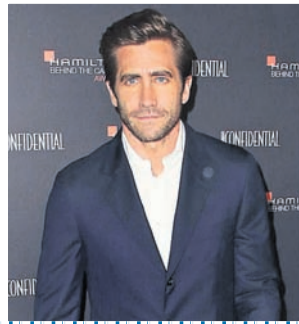


EMMA ON BEING PREGNANT DURING COVID PANDEMIC

Actress Emma Roberts says her close friends helped her through her pregnancy during the Covid pandemic. "I feel so lucky because literally four of my close girlfriends were pregnant or have had a baby that year," Roberts said.

DONNIE DARKO CHANGED MY LIFE: JAKE GYLLENHAAL

Hollywood star Jake Gyllenhaal says the cult sci-fi film, *Donnie Darko*, not only changed his career, but life too. As the film completed 20 years since release, the actor looked back at memories associated with the film in an Instagram post.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Whip up some excitement in your life — put on your walking shoes and go explore some unknown destination, suggests Ganesh. Your sentiments may have an ill-effect on your health. You may spend quality time with family members and friends, hoping to shed the burden thrust upon your soul.

TAURUS
You will find yourself at the crossroads and each turn and twist will come with its share of pros and cons, says Ganesh. Your sentiments may have an ill-effect on your health. You may spend quality time with family members and friends, hoping to shed the burden thrust upon your soul.

GEMINI
Today, you will decide to become a bit more conscious about your health. You may or may not join a gym or measure your calories, but you will definitely sit up and take notice of your lifestyle and unhealthy food habits, predicts Ganesh.

CANCER
Today, you are likely to experience something life-changing. A small incident, an observation, a tragedy, a disaster, or a simple thought may change the course of your life. You, however, may not be able to take the changes well.

LEO
Your passionate and emotional nature contributes in a big way to your sudden outbursts of emotions, says Ganesh. Today, your anger may erupt abruptly. This makes it very likely for you to get carried away irrespective of your surroundings and circumstances, both at work and at home.

VIRGO
Close members of your family and friends will take up most of your time today. Students will have to pay more attention to studies as exams are upcoming, and they will have to learn to balance study and free time. Ganesh says today is a good time to buy property.

LIBRA
"Every man has specific natural abilities," said Aristotle. This seems to be true for you today. Your natural talents will be acknowledged and documented at work. This might prompt your equals to hold you up above the rest, and for your seniors to positively encourage you to scale greater heights.

SCORPIO
"It's a dream come true," you may utter these words in surprise today, feels Ganesh. Your palatial home is ready or you may just get the keys of your much desired vehicle. You may have an extended celebration by receiving or giving gifts to your closed ones.

SAGITTARIUS
The day is bright and the seas are calm today. For a change, you shall spend time with your life partner and help them in household chores. Even routine jobs like cooking and cleaning will weave an intricate bond between you two.

CAPRICORN
A good day always begins with a good start. It will be a good day for you today as you will start the day with a positive attitude to life, says Ganesh. Your unremitting dedication and determination will not only put you ahead of others, but will also help you get an edge over them.

AQUARIUS
You are a polished diamond. Adversities come and go, yet you remain unruffled. Today, you manage to please your boss, and beloved, and that is a feat! It is yet another day of contentment.

PISCES
Do not let your emotions influence your strategies in any way. Mixing business with sentiments is only for super spies. Keep a close check on your emotions and do not get carried away. Travel for business purposes is indicated, says Ganesh.

DISHA SETS INTERNET ABLAZE AGAIN

Mumbai: Actress and fitness enthusiast Disha Patani has a special surprise for fans Wednesday. She has posted a sizzling snapshot in a tiny bikini.

Disha shared the picture on Instagram flaunting perfect curves in a tiny aqua number, and posing with a tree bark.

For the caption, she dropped a coconut tree emoji.

In November, Disha shared similar pictures raising temperature in social media.

Disha will next be seen in *Radhe*, co-starring Salman Khan and Ranveer Singh. The film is directed by Prabhudeva.

She is also looking forward to reuniting with filmmaker Mohit Suri on the set of *Ek Villain 2*. The actress has earlier collaborated with Mohit on their 2020 film *Malang*.

The *Baaghi* actress will also be seen in "KTina", produced by Ekta Kapoor. The film also features Akshay Oberoi and Sunny Singh.



Kangana's Twitter account restricted

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut Wednesday tweeted that her Twitter account has been restricted temporarily.

This comes after she made controversial remarks about Tandav creators through a post. In the now-deleted tweet, Kangana had said that it was 'time to take their heads off', for allegedly insulting Hindu gods in the web series.

Now, the actress has slammed the 'liberal community' who reported her account to Twitter, going on to call Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey 'chacha'.

"Librus cried to their chacha @jack and got my account temporarily restricted," she wrote.

Tandav has come under fire with several people alleging that it provokes communal disharmony and hurts the sentiments of the Hindus.

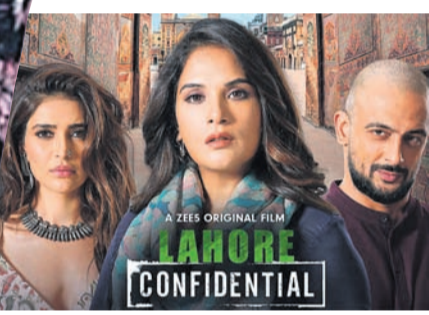
'Recreating Lahore in Lucknow is not difficult'



Mumbai: Filmmaker Kunal Kohli has opened up about his upcoming romantic spy thriller *Lahore Confidential*. He said that recreating Lahore in Lucknow is not difficult as the history of India and Pakistan is similar because they were one country once.

"After 1947, the history of the two countries changed path. Till then they have the same path. Geographically, too, it is similar. There is a lot of similarity out there in the streets, and the buildings and architecture of both the countries. Hence it was not that difficult (to recreate Lahore in Lucknow), and our art director has done a wonderful job. We have managed to do so because we have a common history," said Kohli.

Lahore Confidential revolves around an Indian woman who, amidst her mundane routine and love for Urdu literature, finds herself on intelligence duty in Pakistan. Created by crime writer S Hussain Zaidi, it also marks the directorial digital comeback of Kohli. The film features Karishma Tanna, Arunoday Singh and Richa Chadha.



AJIT'S 21ST FOUNDATION DAY

Play *E Nabaghanara Ghara* staged to remember Ajit Das

Ajit Das was a living legend and he will be remembered for generations through his works, says Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi Secretary Prabodh Rath

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Students of late theatre director and actor Ajit Das Wednesday presented play *E Nabaghanara Ghara* at Rabindra Mandap here to celebrate the 72nd birth anniversary of their beloved 'guru'. The occasion also marked the 21st Foundation Day of Abhinaya Jagruti Institute of Theatre (AJIT), a troupe formed in the name of the actor who suc-

cumbed to Covid-19.

Written by Panchanana Patra and directed by Ajit Das, the drama narrated the story of Nabaghana whose home was in shambles as he didn't have a life partner to run the household.

Ajit's wife and the founder of the troupe Maya Das said, "Most of the dramas directed by him (Ajit Das) were masterpieces. What could have been more appropriate on this occasion than staging this play which was very close

to his heart. Though we are yet to overcome the shock of his exit, I am sure people will love this play in his absence."

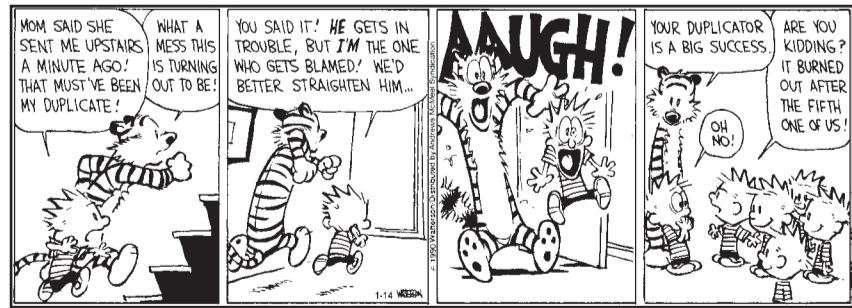
Eminent dramatist Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi and Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi Secretary Prabodh Rath were among the guests who graced the occasion. "Ajit Das was a living legend who will be remembered for generations through his works. Needless to say, his distinct touch was felt in every sequence of this play," said Rath. The play was enacted by Bibhuprasad, Pruthiraj, Bijay, Jaganath, Ramakant, Siddhartha, Neel, Himashu, Chandan, Pray and Barsha while the music was scored by Kailash.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

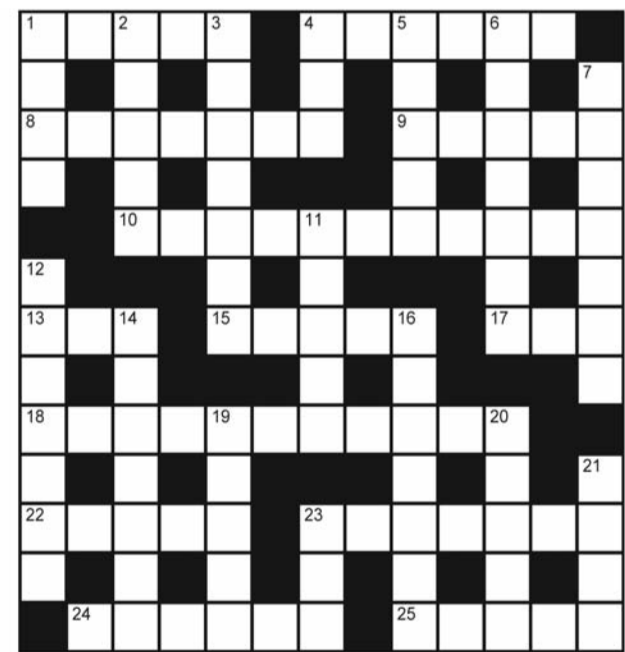


BREVITY



FUN post

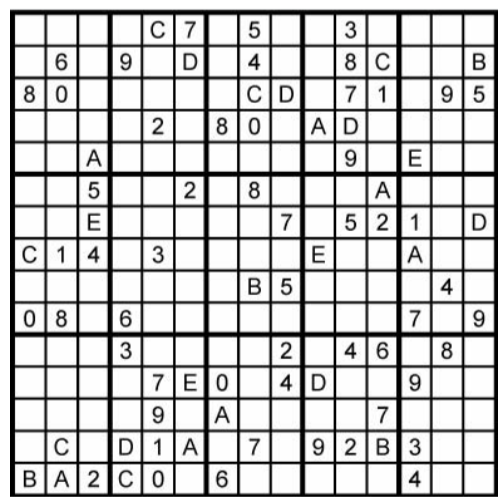
CROSSWORD



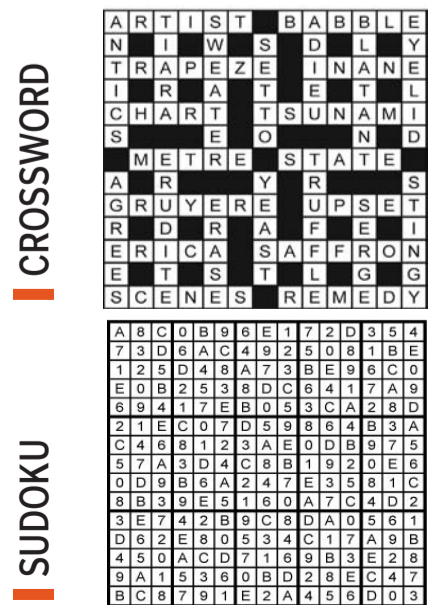
- Across**
- 1 Hot rock
 - 4 Sharp as a tack
 - 8 Jalousie parts
 - 9 Keyboard instrument
 - 10 Ignominious
 - 13 Golfer's goal
 - 15 Terrific
 - 17 Stage signal
 - 18 Motley assortment (4,3,4)
 - 22 Weeper of myth
- Down**
- 23 Savage
 - 24 Start
 - 25 Saltpetre
 - 1 Stubborn sort
 - 2 Wild pumpkin
 - 3 Collars
 - 4 Commercials
 - 5 Something to talk about
 - 6 Kind of cop or jam
 - 7 Hockey players
 - 11 Speedy
 - 12 Name
 - 14 California tree
 - 16 Dilapidated (3-4)
 - 19 Sharp narrow ridge
 - 20 Bloodhound's clue
 - 21 Eye affliction
 - 23 Wine holder

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



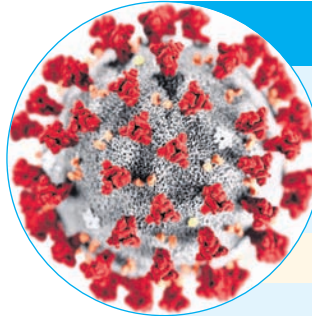
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



VENDORS' RALLY

Members of small traders and vending zone protection trust take out a rally at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, to observe the National Vendors Day



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	9,67,80,975	6,94,54,527	20,69,443
India	1,04,95,816	1,01,28,457	1,51,564
Odisha	3,33,723	3,30,321	1,902

'Hybrid' Adivasi Mela this year

The fair will be held at Adivasi Exhibition Ground from January 26 and continue till February 9

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: The state government Wednesday launched a Social Media Plan (SMP) for a hybrid model of the Adivasi Mela by converting the challenges of Covid-19 into an opportunity in a bid to take it beyond state and national boundaries.

The mela will be held physically from January 26 to February 9 in the Adivasi Exhibition Ground located here at Unit-1 area and will remain open for public from 11 am till 7 pm.

Launching the SMP, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra said that the ST/SC department has planned the SMP as a positive response to the unprecedented pandemic. "This hybrid model will further widen its popularity by extending it to the persons who are unable to visit it physically," he said.

Mohapatra said, "The virtual mode of the mela will have a marketing platform through which interested people can purchase the tribal products."

He advised the department to develop a permanent digital marketing platform so that people from different parts of the globe can buy



THANKS TO TECHNOLOGY

The virtual mode of the fair will have a marketing platform. Dedicated handles on Facebook, Twitter etc have been created to reach out to more people. Various activities will be undertaken to engage social media followers.

The cultural programme will be available on virtual mode. One can also have a virtual visit to Adivasi Museum through the platform. Online registration facility would be made available from January 23

the products throughout the year.

Speaking on the occasion, Development Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena said, "This endeavour of the department will give global linkage to Odisha's tribal producers and artisans."

He advised to make the marketing platform a sustainable source of rewarding income for tribal people of the state.

Department secretary Ranjana Chopra said, "It will be a comprehensive plan with multiple com-

ponents. Dedicated handles on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube have been created to reach out to more and more people. The themes have been built around various tribes, their life and culture and their heritage".

The themes have been built around various tribes, their life and culture and their heritage". She added, "Various activities will be undertaken to engage the social media followers and keep them updated on the events of the Odisha Adivasi Mela 2021."

The cultural programme will be available on virtual mode. One can also have a virtual visit to Adivasi Museum through the Mela platform.

All Covid-19 protocols would be followed scrupulously. Online registration facility would be made available from January 23 through the website of the Adivasi Mela-2021 for convenience of the intending visitors.

Interested people may avail this facility and may register online for their smooth entry into the Mela Ground. However, the online registration for visiting the mela is only for the sake of convenience but not mandatory, Chopra clarified.

ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS



Artistes stage a street play near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar to create awareness on road safety norms, Wednesday

2 FOREST OFFICIALS SHOWN THE DOOR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Two officials of Forest and Environment department have given compulsory retirement over corruption charges and dereliction of duty. Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha Wednesday issued an order in this regard.

The two forest officials are assistant conservator of forests of Kuldaha range (Balasore forest division), Laxman Pradhan and forester of Bisra range (Panposh forest division) Bharat Kumar Ghadai.

Pradhan had been placed under suspension following a case filed with the Lokayukta on corruption charges. The General Administration (Vigilance) department had initiated a disciplinary proceeding against him for dereliction of duty and amassing disproportionate assets. While he was in charge of Kuldaha wildlife range, a decomposed carcass of a tusker had been recovered and the two tusks were also missing. Similarly, many vigilance cases have been registered against Ghadai over corruption charges. The cases are still pending against him.

BJP threatens stir over farmers' woes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: BJP leader Lekshari Samantsinghar Thursday said that the party would launch an agitation in western Odisha on the issue of poor paddy procurement from farmers and plight of the peasants.

The leader called a press meet Thursday to announce the same. "The farmers in the state are struggling to sell their crops and get deserving income due to faulty policies of the government and government apathy. The millers are manipulating the whole process."

She also added, "We have de-

ecided that we will organise protests in western Odisha where our MPs and MLAs from the area would also take part to press our demands to give justice to the farmers of the land."

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on the other hand also responded to the threats of agitation and posed a counter attack on the saffron party. "We have been able to procure 25 per cent more paddy from the farmers compared to last year. Finding fault on this is wrong on part of the party. Instead of fighting against the laws framed against farmers, the BJP is behind finding faults in paddy procurement issue," BJD leader Pratap Keshari Deb said.

PADDY PROCUREMENT

Actor Rabi Mishra passes away at 64

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Odia actor Rabi Mishra passed away while undergoing treatment at a private hospital here Wednesday. He was 64.

Family sources said that Mishra was admitted to the hospital after he complained of chest pain last evening.

Mishra, a versatile actor, has performed in positive, negative and comedy characters and dominated the Odia entertainment industry for more than two decades.

He is known for his role in popular Odia movies like Sakal Tirtha, Ma Pari Kie Heba, Soubhyagabati, Rakhi Bhijigala Akhi Luhare and Mana Rahigala Tumari Thare. Mishra has also acted in more than 100 television serials and plays. He is fondly remembered for his role in popular television serial 'Gopal Rahasya'. Several eminent persons including Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan, BJP national vice president Bajajayant Panda and several eminent actors of Odia film industry consoled his death.

In a condolence message in his Twitter page, the CM wrote, "I am deeply saddened to learn about the demise of eminent actor Rabi Mishra. He would be remembered for all times to come for the unforgettable imprint that he has left for his flawless role in many popular Odia films and television serials."

He expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family members and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

1 in 2 women in state anemic

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: If individual studies are to be believed, about one in two women in Odisha of reproductive age are anemic owing to deficiency of iron in Odia diets coupled with lack of awareness, largely among tribal women. In a study conducted Delhi-based DCOR, under project Reduction in Anemia through Normative Innovations (RANI), about 51% women in the state were observed as anemic. The study also revealed that more than 60% women in 11 districts of Odisha are iron deficient.

With about 73% women in Sambalpur found anemic, the district topped the list. Moreover, a large number of tribal districts such as Malakangiri, Sundargarh

WORRYING TREND

The study revealed that more than 60% women in 11 districts of Odisha are iron deficient

It was found that iron density in an Odia diet was 25% lower than the recommended iron density of 14.2 mg/1000 kcal

and Nabarangpur also had high prevalence of anemia in women.

"Iron deficiency is the key reason of anemia. The primary outcomes measured through this study are change in hemoglobin level and Iron Folic Acid (IFA) utilization. In each of the villages, we used a Hemocue meter that measures hemoglobin levels. More than half of Women of Reproductive

Age (WRA) were found anemic across state," the study mentioned.

Moreover, prevalence of anemia was found highest in lactating women (54.8%). This was followed by pregnant women (47.6%), and WRA who are neither breastfeeding nor pregnant (50.3%). It can be mentioned that experts have suggested that high cause of anemia in Odisha is largely due to deficit of iron in primarily in Odia diets.

In another study, it was found that mean reported iron density (amount of iron per 1000 kcal) in an Odia diet was 25% lower than the recommended adequate dietary iron density of 14.2 mg/1000 kcal. The reported per capita median daily intake of iron in Odisha is 14 mg/d, but is heterogeneous, ranging from 7 to 21 mg per day in different districts.



Artists giving finishing touches to murals based on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army at Netaji Birthplace Museum in Cuttack ahead of the birth anniversary of the legendary freedom fighter, Wednesday

FITTING TRIBUTE

Will be happy to fight polls, says Pratibha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Wife of deceased Pipili MLA Pradeep Maharathy Wednesday said that she would be happy to fight elections from Pipili in the by-elections if given a chance.

While reacting to reporters at the sidelines of an event, Pratibha Maharathy said, "I don't want to speak on the issue now. The nomination of the candidate from Pipili will be taken by the party president Naveen Patnaik. I do not want to comment on that. I will be very happy if I get the chance (to fight elections) but it depends on the party chief as election is a different process."

After the demise of the incumbent MLA, speculations are high on who would fight the by-elections to fill the vacant seat of the Odisha Assembly.

HANDLOOM EXPO KICK STARTS AMID FANFARE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Organised by Boyanika, the National Level Handloom Expo 2021 was inaugurated amid much fan fare at Exhibition Ground here Wednesday.

Minister Of Handloom, Textiles and Handicrafts Padmini Dian inaugurated the expo in the presence of Minister of Science and Technology, Public Enterprise, Social Security and Empowerment of PwD Ashok Chandra Panda and Bhubaneswar Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena.

With around 134 stalls, the expo featured nine yard traditional saree along with various handicrafts.

Interacting with Orissa POST, Dian said, "The government is quite concerned about our weavers and that is why we have organised



Handlooms, Textile and Handicrafts minister Padmini Dian, departmental commissioner-cum-secretary Subha Sarma and Science & Technology minister Ashok Chandra Panda visit a stall at the National Handloom Expo 2021

this expo. Weavers have participated in large numbers and I am expecting all the losses incurred

during Covid to be recovered through the fest."

Ashok Panda said, "Our handi-

crafts and handloom are world famous and the state government is ready to make this expo successful as the Covid threat is diminishing due to the vaccination drive. The government is concerned about the weavers' welfare both financially and technically."

Jena said that the popularity of Odissi handloom is sky rocketing. "From foreign buyers to Bollywood stars, all are buying our products. Our technique in making Odia sarees and dress materials have made weavers of other states exchange ideas with us. A healthy financial package for weavers is always the priority of our state government."

The centre of attraction was the theme pavilion which showcased every single type of Odissi saree, from Maniabandha to Sambalpuri

to Ikkat.

Live sessions on block print and saree making too attracted the visitors. Apart from Odisha, weavers from states like New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal are participating in the expo.

The expo is open for public from 11.30 am to 9.30 pm. The expo is committed to achieve a profit of Rs 10 crore this year. All precautionary Covid guidelines are being followed at the expo.

Subha Sharma, commissioner-cum-secretary handlooms, textiles and handicraft department, Jyoti Prakash Das, director, textiles and handloom, Odisha and managing director of Boyanika were also present at the function.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

BASANTA MISRA EDUCATIONAL & WELFARE TRUST, HIG C-121, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar, Odisha- 751003 invites tender in a sealed cover under two bid system i.e. Technical Bid & Financial Bid from Manufacturers, Authorized distributors for supply of machineries and equipments for establishment of Common Facility Centre for TELKOI TAMARIND, MANGO AND MAHUA CLUSTER on behalf of OMRUT TRUST (SPV) at: PLOT No. 393, Kaduapada, Dist: Keonjhar, Odisha -758019.

Date of commencement of tender	Last date and time of submission of tender	Date & time for opening of tender	Cost of tender paper
20.01.2021	04.02.2021 at 5:00 pm	05.02.2021 at 11:00 am	Rs.10,000/-

A complete set of the Bid documents containing the details of the terms and conditions may be downloaded from the website: www.bmewtrust.com or www.iwedodisha.nic.in and the same can be submitted along with cost of tender paper in shape of Bank Draft. Any corrigendum/ addendum/ information related to this NIT will only be uploaded in BASANTA MISRA EDUCATIONAL & WELFARE TRUST website which will not be published in Newspapers. The authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof. The authority has the right to increase/ decrease / cancel the quantity without assigning any reason thereof.

CHAIRMAN, Basanta Misra Educational and Welfare Trust

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Ref No: BMEWT/Tender/2021/02 Date: 21.01.2021

BASANTA MISRA EDUCATIONAL & WELFARE TRUST, HIG C-121, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751003 invites tender in a sealed cover under two bid system i.e. Technical Bid & Financial Bid from licenced registered Civil Engineers/ Contractors of class B & above (having minimum three years of experiences in building construction) for establishment of Common Facility Centre for TELKOI TAMARIND, MANGO AND MAHUA CLUSTER on behalf of OMRUT TRUST (SPV) at: PLOT No. 393, Kaduapada, Dist: Keonjhar, Odisha -758019.

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Chairman Basanta Misra Educational & Welfare Trust



You (Stalin) should come without a paper slip to debate. You must not read out from a note prepared by someone else. List out your claims of corruption and I will answer

NCB ARRESTS DAWOOD'S AIDE

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Wednesday arrested gangster Parvez Khan alias Chinku Pathan, a henchman of fugitive Underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, in connection with a drugs case from neighbouring Navi Mumbai, an official said, adding some drugs were also seized



of the day quote

With the opening of the logistics hub in Nangal Chaudhary village, for the first time, multinational companies will come in southern Haryana

Natural partners for greener, prosperous world: Foreign Secretary @harshvshrimgla met Ambassadors of EU countries today & discussed India-EU strategic cooperation in context of India-EU+27 Leaders' Summit in May; focus on Trade, Investments, Climate Change & Indo-Pacific

I am jubilant and so very proud at your magnificent, heroic and historic victory at Brisbane. Your performance, against incredible odds, has brought glory to India, and shone the international spotlight on the superb quality of Team India's players

SHORT TAKES

36 injured in bus mishap

Lalitpur (UP): At least 36 passengers were injured when a stationary bus was hit by another one in Uttar Pradesh's Lalitpur district Wednesday, police said. The incident took place around 5.30 pm near Nehru College on a national highway. The private bus with passengers from Indore stopped near the Nehru College when another bus came from Jhansi side and hit it from the rear side, Assistant Superintendent of Police Girijesh Kumar said.

Mata Prasad passes away

Lucknow: Former Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Mata Prasad, passed away here in the wee hours of Wednesday. He was 96 years old. He had been admitted to the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) Tuesday evening with diagnosis of multi-organ failure, requiring life-saving supportive therapies.

Indian jailed

New Delhi/Singapore: A 26-year-old Indian painter in Singapore was sentenced to nine months in prison Wednesday for molesting a pregnant woman after following her to a lift lobby, according to a media report. Kota Durga Prasad molested the three-month pregnant woman who was visiting her husband in Singapore on the night of September 5 last year, reported the Channel News Asia. Kota thought that the victim "looked pretty" and decided to follow her on seeing her crossing a traffic junction in the Jurong West residential area.

Tiger triggers panic in UP village

Shahjahanpur (UP): The presence of a tiger in a village here was confirmed on Wednesday after the big cat and its cubs were seen in CCTV camera footage from the area, triggering a panic among locals.

Student shot dead

Ambala: A 19-year-old student was shot dead in Ambala city by some unknown assailants, police said Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Ayan, a resident of Ranjit Nagar area of Ambala City.

Leaking classified info act of 'treason': Cong on Arnab chat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 20: Upping the ante against the government over journalist Arnab Goswami's purported social media chat leak, the Congress on Wednesday described it as an act of "treason" and demanded an immediate inquiry into the leak of such classified information about the Balakot air strike. It said that the party will raise the issue during Parliament's Budget Session.

The Congress brought out several senior leaders to corner the government over the issue including former Defence Minister A.K. Antony, former Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde, former Law Minister Salman Khurshid, Congress Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad and party spokesperson Pawan Khera. Addressing a press conference here at the party headquarters Antony said, "The contents of the leaked chats between Goswami of Republic TV and the former CEO of BARC is a serious issue for the entire nation."

Antony said that for a very patriotic Indian, it is a shock and a serious matter of concern because it affects national security. The Congress leader said that it affects the security of the armed forces, and especially in this case the security of the brave air warriors. "And also in the way they (Goswami and BARC CEO) mentioned the martyrdom of 40 CRPF men is all a serious concern for us," Antony said. He said the people of the country and the political parties might have differences on several issues but are united when it comes to national security cutting across religious and party lines to protect the country.

"But now it is very clear that classified documents that too considering the national security and also considering the most sensitive secret air strikes were available with the people who were not expected to know it, and were not authorised to get these documents," Antony said.



The contents of the leaked chats between Goswami of Republic TV and the former CEO of BARC is a serious issue for the entire nation

He said "I am very sad and shocked" over the leaked chats between Goswami and former BARC CEO Partho Dasgupta and the language they used while mentioning the martyrdom of 40 CRPF troopers.

Firing a salvo at the government, the Congress leader said, "Three days before the Balakot air strikes, how did one journalist come to know of the details of it? It would have affected the operation and its effectiveness."

Only very few people are expected to be in the know of such secret information, to know the details of the military operations. "Even all the Cabinet ministers are not expected to get that as only a handful of people and a few military people are informed about such operations," he said. "These documents were leaked to the media, but not the entire media but to only one journalist by the people who were in top positions in the government," he alleged.

"Leaking official secrets about the military operation, national security matters, sensitive military operations especially air force strike is treason and anti-national activity," he said. Referring to the alleged chats of Goswami with Dasgupta, Khurshid said, "It raises questions that if the talks of such kind were going on, then was there any influence on the judiciary?" And did any wrong decision be taken due to such pressures. They also discussed a meeting with Law Minister," he said.

Top court rejects pleas seeking review of 2018 Aadhaar verdict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its 2018 verdict which had upheld the Centre's flagship Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid but struck down some of its provisions, including its linking with bank accounts, mobile phones and school admissions.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar, by a majority of 4:1, rejected the review pleas against the apex court's September 26, 2018 verdict.

Justice D Y Chandrachud, one of the five-judges of the bench, dissented with the majority verdict and said that the review petitions be kept pending until a larger bench decides the question related to certification of a bill as a money bill.

The Aadhaar Bill was certified as a money bill which enabled the government to get it cleared without getting the assent of a majority in the Rajya Sabha.

"The present review petitions have been filed against the final judgment and order dated September 26, 2018. We have perused the review petitions as well as the grounds in support thereof. In our opinion, no case for review of judgment and order dated



September 26, 2018 is made out," the majority order of January 11 said.

"We hasten to add that change in the law or subsequent decision/judgment of a coordinate or larger bench by itself cannot be regarded as a ground for review. The review petitions are accordingly dismissed," said the bench, also comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, S Abdul Nazeer and B R Gavai.

The review pleas were taken up for consideration in-chamber by the bench.

In its 2018 verdict, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra had held that while Aadhaar would remain mandatory for filing of Income Tax Return and allotment of permanent account number (PAN), it



would not be mandatory to link Aadhaar number to bank accounts and telecom service providers cannot seek its linking for mobile connections.

In its 4:1 verdict that had also quashed some contentious provisions of the Aadhaar Act, the top court, however, had held Aadhaar would be needed for availing facilities of welfare schemes and government subsidies.

Ruling that seeding of Aadhaar would not be required for opening bank accounts, availing mobile services, by CBSE, NEET, JEE, UGC and for admissions in schools and free education for children, the top court had observed that Aadhaar had also become a household name and that its use has spread like a "wildfire".

GALWAN BRAVEHEARTS HONOURED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The names of 20 Indian Army personnel, who were killed while valiantly fighting Chinese troops in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in June last year, were inscribed on the National War Memorial ahead of the Republic Day, official sources said.

Col B Santosh Babu, the commanding officer of the 16 Bihar regiment, was among the Indian soldiers who laid down their lives in the fierce hand-to-hand combat June 15, an incident that marked one of the most serious military conflicts between the two sides in decades.

China is yet to disclose the number of its soldiers killed and injured in the clash though it officially admitted to having suffered casualties. According to an

The war memorial was built in the memory of those who were killed in action after India's Independence. In the 'Galwan clash' of June 15, 2020, 20 Indian soldiers died even as the Chinese never made their casualties public

American intelligence report, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35. The Galwan Valley clash had escalated the border row in eastern Ladakh and resulted in a large deployment of troops and heavy weaponry by both the armies at the friction points.

Some of these soldiers are also likely to be honoured with gallantry awards on the Republic Day.

The Chinese soldiers used stones, nail-studded sticks, iron rods and clubs in carrying out brutal attacks on Indian soldiers after they protested the erection of a surveillance post by China around patrolling point 14 in Galwan Valley.

The Indian Army has already built a memorial for the 'Gallants of Galwan' at Post 120 in eastern Ladakh. The memorial mentioned their heroic under operation 'Snow Leopard' and the way they evicted the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops from the area while inflicting "heavy casualties" on them. During a visit to Lukung forward post in eastern Ladakh on July 17 last year, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had personally conveyed his appreciation and com-

FARMERS' TRACTOR RALLY 'REHEARSAL' HELD IN GURUGRAM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gurugram, Jan 20: The Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) in Gurugram conducted a tractor rally 'rehearsal' in Gurugram on Wednesday ahead of Republic Day, in support of the farmers' protests against the three farm laws.

SKM president Chaudhary Santokh Singh, farmers and other members of the Morcha participated in the event.

Singh said hundreds of tractors and other vehicles which had affixed the national flag on their vehicles started their journey at 12 noon and covered major stretches of the city.

"The tractor rally rehearsal started from the Bajghera flyover and later moved towards Palam Vihar Road, Sheetla Mata Road, Atul Kataria Chowk and Maharana Pratap Chowk.

The rally covered around 12 kms in the city," Singh said. However, when the tractor rally cavalcade reached the Maharana Pratap Chowk the police personnel stationed at the chowk stopped the tractor rally by erecting barricades at the location as the farmers wanted to go on the Delhi-Jaipur expressway.

The protesters later ended their tractor rally rehearsal at Maharana Pratap Chowk.



A CISF officer gives instructions to his fellows for tight security arrangements at Taj Mahal ahead of the Republic Day, in Agra

After vaccine diplomacy, India rises to supply rice to the world

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 20: India is rapidly turning out to be the most crucial supplier of rice in the world. Supply of the staple cereal from other major rice exporting economies including Thailand and Vietnam fell sharply in 2020, due to reduced production after floods and droughts ravaged those countries. Besides, compared to the Indian rice, the price of the grain supplied by Thailand and Vietnam is almost \$100 to \$150 higher per tonne.

A stronger Thai Baht has also become a cause for concern for many rice exporters in the south-east Asian country.

Not just Thailand, according to Worldstopexports, a data collation portal, Vietnam's rice exports de-

clined by 48.6 per cent, Pakistan's 36.9 per cent.

India has started supplying broken rice to several new markets including China, Vietnam, Malaysia besides Bangladesh besides increasing the quantum to its existing markets. The price sensitive African countries have also increased their rice orders from India, as its role in maintaining global food security becomes more pronounced.

India has already exported about 7 million tonnes of non-basmati rice in the April-November period, a jump of 123 per cent. According to the All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA) the total exports of broken rice could touch 10 million tonne in 2020-21. The export of basmati rice, which is pri-



marily directed towards Europe, US and the middle-eastern countries, witnessed a jump of 71 per cent.

"We expect the year 2021 to be very good for the rice exporters of the country with higher production and competitive pricing," Vinod Kaul, executive director, All India

Rice Exporters' Association told IndiaNarrative.com.

Kaul added that with increased rice production, India has sufficient stocks to meet domestic demands including the quantum required for the public distribution system (PDS) and expand its ship-

ment to all other importing countries.

According to Bangkok Post, rice exports in 2021 "are expected to slightly recover from an expected 5.8 million tonnes in 2020, which was the lowest in 20 years." Typically rice from Thailand is priced at about \$400-\$450 per tonne while India exports the grain at about \$300 per tonne.

"Rice exports remain gloomy this year, as consumers worldwide are likely to opt to save their money and buy rice at cheaper prices," the newspaper quoted Chookiat Ophaswongse, honorary president of the Thai Rice Exporters Association, as saying.

Sources said that Indian rice exporters are ready to meet additional demand which may arise as many

both in relation to food and social contact, while at the same time causing them worry," Fjaldstad said.

The researchers also found that the sense of taste was also significantly reduced, to 69.0 on a scale from 0-100, adding the remaining sense of feeling in the mouth was also reduced to 37.3 on a scale from 0-100.

The study is of interest both to patients suffering sensory loss as well as clinicians and researchers who work with diagnostics and following-up on COVID-19, the researchers said.

Previously, researchers have based the correlation between COVID-19 and the loss of the chemical senses on smaller studies. The new studies collected large amounts of data from countries all over the world.

Loss of smell most relevant sign of Covid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Loss of smell may be the best predictor of COVID-19 among patients with symptoms of respiratory diseases, according to new research.

The findings of two new international studies, published in the journal Chemical Senses, show that there is frequent loss of smell in COVID-19 patients which often lasts for a long time. Over 4,500 COVID-19 patients from a total of 23 nationalities responded to the researchers' questionnaire.

The studies found that the average loss of the sense of smell was 79.7 on a scale from 0-100, indicating a large to complete sensory loss. "This emphasises how important it is to be aware of this symptom, as it may be the



only symptom of the disease," said Alexander Wieck Fjaldstad from Aarhus University in Denmark. The research found that only around half of patients with a loss of smell got their sense of smell back after forty days. "This differs from the picture we see with other viral infections and causes long-term discomfort for patients,



The BJP-led governments in both the state and Centre have been executing several developmental works in Goa. Few projects will be completed in the next few days

NEXT WET SPELL LIKELY IN J&K, LADAKH FROM FRIDAY

Minimum temperatures remained several notches below the freezing point in the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh on Wednesday as the weather office forecast another wet spell beginning January 22



of the day quote

Nitish Kumar is the Chief Minister for the last 16 years. He is also in charge of the Home Department, but is unable to prevent crimes in Bihar



Distressed to learn about the loss of lives in a tragic road accident in Dhupguri, West Bengal. In this hour of grief, my thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families. I wish speedy recovery for the injured



In Goa sitting MLAs get a quota of 300 litres petrol per month. Ministers are entitled to get unlimited supply of petrol, which is why the government is not affected by the travails of the common man



SHORT TAKES

30 kg IED recovered

Dantewada: A powerful 30 kg improvised Explosive device (IED) planted by Naxals was recovered in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Wednesday, police said.

Sex racket busted in Mumbai

Mumbai: Police have busted a high-profile flesh trade racket at a plush hotel in Mumbai and rescued eight models from there, an official said Wednesday.

Rape victim critical

Bhopal: A 17-year-old victim of rape, a case in which the accused is an elderly newspaper owner, allegedly took an overdose of sleeping pills at a shelter home here and has been admitted to hospital where her condition is very critical, said a senior police official Wednesday.

BSF on alert

Jammu: The BSF is fully alert to thwart any misadventure by Pakistan along the borders of the country, the force's Special Director General, Western Command, Suresh Panwar said Wednesday.

India starts COVID vaccine shipments to its neighbours



New Delhi, Jan 20 : Bhutan and Maldives Wednesday became the first two countries to receive COVID-19 vaccines sent by India in sync with its 'neighbourhood first' policy.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar shared on Twitter photos of the consignments reaching the two countries. On Tuesday, India had said it would send COVID-19 vaccines under grant assistance to Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles from Wednesday.

The supplies to Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Mauritius will commence after confirmation of necessary regulatory clearances. It is learnt that 1,50,000 doses of Covishield vaccine, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII), were sent to Bhutan and 1,00,000 doses reached Maldives as part of India's grant assistance.

Healthcare worker dies hours after getting job

Hyderabad: A healthcare worker in Telangana, who was vaccinated for Covid-19 Tuesday, died Wednesday but authorities said the death seems unrelated to the vaccine.

an increasing number of countries have already approached it for procuring coronavirus vaccines. The Ministry of External Affairs had said on Tuesday that India would supply COVID-19 vaccines to partner countries over the coming weeks and months in a phased manner, keeping in view the domestic requirements.

India, S'pore ink submarine rescue pact

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 20 : India and Singapore signed a strategic partnership agreement Monday, under which both the countries' navies will support and cooperate with each other for submarine rescue missions.

It is one of the major steps taken by the Indian government to strengthen ties with South East/Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

The decision was taken during a defence ministerial dialogue in the national capital. Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh co-chaired the fifth India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue along with Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Defence, Singapore.



ongoing defence cooperation engagements between the two countries despite limitations imposed by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Defence and security engagements between India and Singapore have broadened significantly in scale and scope across all three services of the armed forces as well as in the areas of defence technology and industry.

The ministers witnessed the signing of the Implementing Agreement on Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation between the Indian Navy and the Singapore Navy.

They also conveyed their full support towards the early conclusion of agreements to facilitate the conduct of live firings and to establish reciprocal arrangements for the cross-attendance of military courses.

pandemic mitigation measures implemented in Singapore and the contribution of Singapore's armed forces in restricting the spread of Covid-19. He also highlighted the role of the Indian armed forces in combating Covid-19 and various missions undertaken to assist in repatriation of Indians stranded overseas.

HIDDEN TALENT



A Nihang shows his skills during ongoing farmers' protest against at Ghazipur border in New Delhi

CORRUPTION CASE

CBI arrests its own DSP, Inspector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The CBI has arrested its own DSP RK Rishi, Inspector Kapil Dhankad and advocate Manohar Malik in connection with a corruption case, an official said Wednesday.

A Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) source related to the development told IANS: "The agency arrested Rishi, Dhankad and Malik Tuesday.

The source said that the CBI follows a policy of zero-tolerance towards corruption.

Earlier in the day, the CBI carried out searches at two places in Uttar Pradesh's Roorkee and Saharanpur that are linked to Deputy Superintendent of Police Rishi.

The source said that multiple CBI teams searched the residential premises of Rishi in Roorkee and Saharanpur's Deoband.

The CBI has also registered a corruption case against four of its officials and a few private persons.

In the FIR, the CBI alleged that the four officials booked for corruption had received bribes to extend favours to at least two private companies under probe for bank fraud.

Scenes snipped from Tandav, but trouble continues with more FIRs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 20: At least two scenes were removed from the controversial web series "Tandav", which found itself in more trouble Wednesday with an FIR against its makers, this time in Madhya Pradesh, and threats of another in Maharashtra.

A scene of a play and a conversation between two key characters were snipped from the first episode "Tanashah", a day after the cast and crew of the nine-part starry political saga on Amazon Prime Video once again apologised and said they had decided to implement changes to address the concerns raised.



Shiva and Narad Muni in the theatre production raised hackles.

That scene has gone. Viewers now see Zeeshan's entry on stage as Mahadev amid cheers from the audience and the scene then abruptly shifts to police entering the campus to arrest a student.

Also gone is a conversation depicting prime minister Devki Nandan Singh, played by Tigmanshu Dhulia, insulting Dalit leader Kailash Kumar, enacted by Anup Soni. There have been other changes in the series as well. A dialogue referencing caste between Soni's character and

Sandhya Mridul's Sandhya has been shortened. Notwithstanding the cuts, the show, directed by Ali Abbas Zafar and starring Bollywood A-listers Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia and Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, sank into more trouble.

Mumbai Police registered an FIR against the makers and cast based on a complaint lodged by BJP MLA Ram Kadam. It named the actors, including Saif and Zeeshan, as well as the director, producer, writer, Amazon's Purohit and Amazon India head Amit Agarwal, an official said.

BUNDELKHAND FARMERS OPT FOR NON-CONVENTIONAL CROPS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 20: After the success story of strawberry cultivation in Bundelkhand region, more and more farmers in this region are opting for non-conventional crops, mainly fruits.

Farmers, with the help of agricultural experts going in for fruits, that have a lot of medicinal value and can be grown in the prevailing climatic conditions of Bundelkhand.

Ginger, turmeric, kundru (Coccinia grandis), pointed gourd and aloe vera are some of the varieties which have a good yield, besides have considerable medicinal properties. "With the Corona pandemic, the food habits of people are changing. More and more people are opting for healthy food and spices that have medicinal advantages too.

In such a situation, cultivation of such items is bound to be economically feasible too," said Dhanraj Patel, a farmer in Banda district.

Farmers are also switching to fruit crops including bel, falsa, Indian gooseberry, Buchanania lanzan (chironji), custard apple and fig.

Chief minister Yogi Adityanath, while inaugurating the recent strawberry festival, assured the farmers that the government would take quick remedial measures regarding irrigation and to solve the stray cattle problem for which projects have already been rolled down.

According to agriculture experts, the soil of Bundelkhand region is free from pesticides which makes it more appropriate for growing medicinal plants.



TRP SCAM

NO BAIL FOR DASGUPTA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 20: A sessions court in Mumbai Wednesday rejected the bail application of former CEO of ratings agency BARC, Partho Dasgupta, an accused in the alleged fake Television Ratings Point (TRP) case.

Dasgupta was arrested by the Mumbai crime branch from Pune district last month. A magistrate court had earlier rejected his bail plea, observing that he played a vital role in the scam.

Opposing Dasgupta's bail application in the sessions court, special public prosecutor Shishir Hiray submitted that although the charge-sheet in the case has been filed, there still are multiple things which need to be investigated. He argued that Dasgupta is a key person and holds sizeable control over the entire system, hence his release will amount to tampering with the prosecution witnesses, who work under him.

The special public prosecutor also drew the court's attention towards the purported WhatsApp chat between Dasgupta and Republic TV's Arnab Goswami. "We have shown to the court the WhatsApp chat regarding the TRPs in which Dasgupta promised to take down some other channels and put Arnab's channel on the higher position," he said.

FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Nasal vaccine will be easy to give to kids: AIIMS director

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: A nasal COVID-19 vaccine will be easy to give to school-going children who bear a "very mild" load of the disease but they are infectious, AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria said Wednesday.

The noted pulmonologist, who was interacting with the personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) during their 16th Raising Day celebrations here, also said that people who have contracted coronavirus should also get the job about 4-6 weeks after recovery. "It (coronavirus infection) is very mild in children but they are infectious. They can spread the disease."

"The vaccines that have come are not approved for children because there have been no studies conducted on children but this (vaccination) is a very important step

and trials are being done," he said. Once children start going to the school regularly and they contract the COVID-19 infection, they will not have much problem but if they bring it home they can spread it to their parents or grandparents, the chief of the premier Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) said.

"Vaccines for children may come later. Bharat Biotech is trying to get approved a nasal vaccine. Such a vaccine will be very easy to be given to children as it is a spray and not a jab and hence compliance is more." "In half-an-hour you can vaccinate an entire class. So, if that (nasal vaccine) is approved it will be even easier to give the vaccine (for COVID-19)," Guleria said in reply to a question.

He was also asked by the NDRF personnel if a person who has recovered from COVID-19 should get



Representative image

vaccinated with India commissioning two vaccines last week. "A vaccine jab is essential for them (recovered from coronavirus) due to two reasons."

"One is you are not sure how strong is your post COVID-19 immunity and it has been seen quite a few times that those who had a

mild to moderate infection their anti-body response has been less and we also don't know how long will it be," he said. A vaccine will be "beneficial" for such an individual as it will act as a "booster" and if antibodies are depleting, with the vaccine it will be back to a high level, he said. "So, you should get the vac-

cine if you have been infected with COVID-19 but if it has happened recently say like 7-10 days then one should wait and take the jab after may be 4-6 weeks," he said.

Before replying to queries, Guleria also gave a powerpoint presentation on the topic "Infectious Diseases: Emergencies and Challenges Ahead" and said "bio-terrorism" is an upcoming challenge. He said densely populated countries like India "provide an opportunity" for the outbreak of infectious disease emergencies as it is coupled with the phenomenon of crowding and urbanisation.

World Health Organisation (WHO) chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan also addressed the personnel of the central force through an online link and said a good digital surveillance system should be in place to better deal with public health emergencies.

international



We've had the greatest moment of liberation leaving the EU, which I have campaigned for over 25 years. We rebuild now, aim to do things on our own and stand up for ourselves and have a really strong Global Britain position out there

PRITI PATEL | HOME SECRETARY, UK

GREEK PARL SET TO EXTEND WESTERN COASTAL WATERS

Lawmakers in Greece are set to approve legislation to extend the country's territorial waters along its western coastline from six to 12 nautical miles. Opposition parties say they will vote with the center-right government or abstain in the vote



of the day quote

A higher-than-usual number of possible allergic reactions were reported with a specific lot of Moderna vaccine administered at one community vaccination clinic. Fewer than 10 individuals required medical attention over the span of 24 hours

ERICA PAN | STATE EPIDEMIOLOGIST, CALIFORNIA

Our thinking that Covid-19 is more of respiratory disease is not necessarily true. Once it infects the brain it can affect anything because the brain is controlling your lungs, the heart, everything

MUKESH KUMAR | ASST PROFESSOR, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, US

China is clearly our most important strategic competitor. As you said, we need to work with allies. We also need to strengthen our own economy so that we can compete

JANET YELLEN | (INCOMING) TREASURY SECRETARY, US

SHORT TAKES

Six suspected militants killed

Moscow: Chechnya's Kremlin-backed leader said Wednesday that his forces have killed six suspected militants, including a warlord accused of organizing a 2011 suicide attack at a Moscow airport. Ramzan Kadyrov, the regional leader of Chechnya, said that troops under his command had tracked down the suspects in the village of Katar-Yurt and killed all of them on the spot. Kadyrov claimed that the raid marked the elimination of the last group of militants that remained in the region.

Italy ponders suing Pfizer

Rome: Italy's virus czar is pressing ahead with plans to take legal action against Pfizer after the US pharmaceutical company announced delays in delivering pre-ordered Covid-19 vaccines to Europe. Domenico Arcuri said he had secured unanimous backing from Italy's regional governors to take civil or criminal action, where possible. In a statement late Tuesday, he said: "It was unanimously decided that such action will be taken in the coming days."

Zimbabwe's FM dies of Covid-19

Harare: Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister Sibusiso Moyo, who gained prominence in 2017 as the military general who announced the coup against then-president Robert Mugabe on television, has died from COVID-19, the government announced Wednesday. He was 61. Moyo, previously little known to the public, became the face of the coup when he announced that the military had placed Mugabe under house arrest as the military's armoured vehicles rolled into the capital, Harare.

Conte works to cement majority

Rome: Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte worked to solidify his majority in parliament Wednesday after narrowly winning a Senate confidence vote after a junior coalition ally yanked his support over Conte's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Conte was expected to brief President Sergio Mattarella on his prospects to keep governing, though the timing was uncertain.

FROM THE CAPITOL



President-elect Joe Biden bumps fists with former President Barack Obama



Joe Biden being sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on the West Front of the Capitol



Jennifer Lopez sings to Vice President Kamala Harris after her swearing-in



Lady Gaga sings the National Anthem



Biden and Kamala Harris during the inauguration ceremony



Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner (R) at the departure ceremony of outgoing President Donald Trump, at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland

In historic rite, Biden, Harris sworn-in to lead United States

AGENCIES

New York, Jan 20: Joe Biden was sworn-in as President and Kamala Harris as Vice President in a historic ceremony to take the leadership of a nation ravaged by the Covid-19 pandemic and riven by deep political hostility.

The daughter of Shyamala Gopalan became the first Indian American, the first woman, and the first African American to be sworn in as the Vice President, putting her a heartbeat away from the presidency.

Biden declared after being swearing in, "Democracy has prevailed."

Before Biden, Harris took the oath of office on two Bibles held by her husband Doug Emhoff, one of them that belonged to Regina Helton, whom she has called her "second mother" and another belonged to Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court Justice. She was sworn-in by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina to serve on the court.

Next, Biden swore on a hefty family bible that his wife Jill Biden held. Chief Justice John Roberts gave him the oath of office. At the stroke of noon, they assume the Presidency and Vice Presidency as mandated by the Constitution.

Donald Trump, who boycotted the ceremony, had already left Washington for his new home in



Biden swore on a hefty family bible that his wife Jill Biden held, while Harris took the oath of office on two bibles held by her husband Doug Emhoff

Florida. Two weeks after a mob of Trump supporters had attacked the Capitol, they stood on its west frontage to be sworn-in.

The 25,000 National Guard called in to protect them ceremony outnumbered the guests. Unlike in the past, people were kept away because of the Covid-19 crisis and security considerations.

In Biden's speech that lasted for 21 minutes, he praised Americans for rising to the challenge and reclaiming democracy. He mentioned

the attempt to undo it at that exact location two weeks ago, and renewed his campaign goals of overcoming the pandemic, bringing racial justice and fighting climate change.

Biden also criticised those who have stoked anger and division, and asked those who opposed him to "hear me out." He called out those who lie for political power and profit. "There is truth, and there are lies," he added.

In a message to the international community, Biden said that he would rebuild the alliances frayed over the past four years. "We can make America once again the leading force of good in the world."

Meanwhile, "ready to serve," Kamala Harris said soon after she was sworn-in as America's first woman Vice President. Harris, the daughter of an Indian immigrant from Chennai, scripted history by becoming the first-ever woman Vice President of the United States. She is also the first female, first Black and first South Asian American vice president.

In 2003, Harris won her first race for San Francisco district attorney, becoming the first Black woman to hold such an office in California. In 2010, she became the first Black woman elected as California attorney general, and in 2016, she became only the second Black woman ever elected as a US senator.

Trump pardons former Google engineer who stole trade secrets

AGENCIES

San Francisco, Jan 20: Outgoing US President Donald Trump Wednesday granted a full pardon to former Google engineer Anthony Levandowski, who was convicted of stealing trade secrets.

Levandowski worked for Google's self-driving car unit which is now called Waymo. He later founded a self-driving truck company called Otto that was acquired by Uber.

The engineer was among 73 individuals who were granted pardon by Trump, who also commuted the sentences of an additional 70 individuals.

"My family and I are grateful for the opportunity to move forward, and thankful to the President and others who supported and advocated on my behalf," Levandowski said in a tweet Wednesday.

In August last year, Levandowski was sentenced to 18 months in prison for stealing trade secrets.

US District Judge in San Francisco, William Alsup, said that home confinement would "give a green light to every future brilliant engineer to steal trade secrets. Prison time is the answer to that", according to a report in TechCrunch.

Levandowski also agreed to pay \$756,499.22 in restitution to Google's self-driving car unit Waymo and a fine of \$95,000, said the report.

Experts critical of WH after record Covid-19 deaths

Never before in the recent century has an American President witnessed such a tragic loss of lives. The number is fast approaching the 4,05,000 US fatalities during World War II and the pandemic is among the deadliest events in the country

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, Jan 20: The Trump administration's incompetence in handling Covid-19 has drawn harsh criticism from the academia as the country's death toll from the disease topped another chilling mark of 4,00,000 on Tuesday.

Never before in the recent century has an American President witnessed such a tragic loss of lives. The number is fast approaching the 4,05,000 US fatalities during World War II and the pandemic is among the deadliest events in the country. The 1918 flu pandemic killed 6,75,000 Americans and at least 50 million worldwide, the Xinhua news agency reported.

"What's so troubling about this



loss of life is it was preventable," but "we did not mount a response to wage war against this virus," said Steven Woolf, director emeritus of the Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Thomas Whalen, an associate professor at Boston University and an expert on the American presidency, launched a more scathing attack on the President, saying Donald Trump repeatedly downplayed the public severity of the pathogen.

"He knew this was a threat and really did not do what was necessary to respond to it in a thoughtful and resourceful way," Whalen said of Trump.

Surging infections in the North American country still show no sign of abating, averaging more than 2,30,000 new confirmed cases and 3,000 deaths per day in January.

COVID VAX

China silent on why its top leaders are yet to take a jab

Dozens of new cases recorded

BEIJING: China's capital Beijing recorded another seven coronavirus cases on Wednesday amid a lingering outbreak in the country's north. Another 46 were recorded in Jilin province, 16 in Heilongjiang on the border with Russia and 19 in Hebei, the province surrounding Beijing. China has now recorded a total of 88,557 cases since the virus was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019, with 4,635 deaths. China is hoping to vaccinate 50 million people against the virus by mid-February and is also releasing schools early and telling citizens to stay put during the Lunar New Year travel rush that begins in coming days. A panel of experts commissioned by the World Health Organisation criticised China and other countries this week for not moving to stem the initial outbreak of the coronavirus earlier, prompting Beijing to concede it could have done better but also to defend its response.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Jan 20: China Wednesday boasted that several world leaders have taken its Covid-19 vaccines, but remained silent on why the top Chinese leaders are yet to take the shot.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying in her daily media briefing here named leaders of several countries who have taken one of the two Covid-19 vaccines made in China, publicly reposing their faith in them.

Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Seychelles President Wavel Ramkalawan, leaders of the UAE, Bahrain,



Egypt and Indonesia have been publicly inoculated with Chinese vaccines, she said.

"China has started the inoculation of the vaccines in key groups. We will also carry out

whether top Chinese leaders including President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and others have taken the jabs, she said: "As for the specific question you asked, I have no answer at this moment."

"Vaccine is our silver bullet for epidemic prevention and for our ultimate victory against the virus," she said.

China has launched massive vaccine diplomacy even as it approved only one of its four vaccines, Sinopharm for emergency use. Its other vaccines like Sinovac and CoronaVac have made their way abroad and are being used while they are undergoing the trial process. Back home, China has

launched the free vaccination drive for all its 1.4 billion people starting with key groups. Over 10 million people have been inoculated in the country. The ruling Communist Party leadership and the party cadre are yet to get vaccinated.

Asked whether the World Health Organisation (WHO) has granted emergency approval for its vaccines and will it distribute them through COVAX, the international vaccine alliance, Hua said, "as I understand the relevant companies are in communication with the WHO."

"They are also discussing concrete cooperation for being included in the emergency list of the WHO," she said.

business



Technology plays a key role in the sector's growth. The logistics division has created a platform for the electronic exchange of documents and messages and we are in the process of using it on a pilot basis before we roll out on an all India basis

PAWAN AGARWAL | SPECIAL SECRETARY (LOGISTICS)

NETFLIX SURPASSES 200MN PAID USERS

Paid subscribers for Netflix surpassed the 200 million mark in 2020 as Covid-19 restrictions helped it to gain viewership, the streaming giant has said. The numbers were revealed Tuesday as Netflix reported its Q4 results which saw an addition of over 8.5mn paid subscribers to the platform



of the day quote

The NHA's financial status is in a good shape, and the country's toll revenue, which is ₹34,000 crore per year, will touch ₹1.34 lakh crore a year by 2025



NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

We formally launched Snowflake on Amazon Web Services in Mumbai in May 2020 and that was a big milestone for us where we were able to offer Snowflake locally, which means customers, could now enjoy our services while data residing in India



VIMAL VENKATRAM | COUNTRY MANAGER, SNOWFLAKE INDIA

I must mention that reducing the impact of carbon is one of the greatest challenges which is being faced by our industry. For the steel industry like ours where there is a dominance of blast furnaces, the only way to substantially reduce associated CO2 emissions is to transit towards CCS and CCU



RASIKA CHAUBE | ADDITIONAL SECY (STEEL)

'Insurers to withstand pandemic-led downturn'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 20: Indian insurance companies are likely to withstand the economic downturn exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, with general insurance premium growth in positive territory, Moody's Investors Service report has said.

The report said that general insurance premium growth has been in the positive territory due to the persistent strong sales of health and protection cover.

It noted that resilient sales of health and protection policies reflected the rising consumer awareness about these products during the pandemic, as well as regulators' actions in enabling the insurers to offer protection against the virus.



The report said that general insurance premium growth has been in the positive territory due to the persistent strong sales of health and protection cover

The Indian insurers have also rapidly developed their digital offerings during the pandemic, the report added.

Mohammed Ali Londe, Moody's

Vice President and Senior Analyst, said: "Although the economic slowdown had had an adverse impact on the Indian insurers, with general insurance growth slowing to 2.5 per cent and life insurers' new business premiums falling by 1.7 per cent in the nine months till December 2020, we expect general insurance premium growth to remain in the positive territory due to persistently strong demand for health and protection coverage."

Over the longer term, the industry may benefit as the central government injects capital into publicly owned insurers, and as private insurers reinforce their solvency through a combination of raising of capital and M&A, the report said.

Moody's has said that India's real GDP may contract by 10.6 per cent in FY21.

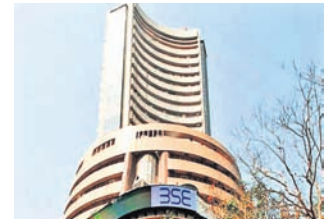
"We expect general insurance premium growth to remain in positive territory. Persistently strong demand for health and protection coverage will support general and life insurance premiums," it said.

Health premiums rose 13.7 per cent in the fiscal's nine months up to December 2020, supporting general insurance premium growth.

Sensex closing in on 50K-mark, ends on a new high

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Jan 20: The Indian equity indices continued their upward journey for second consecutive day Wednesday with key indices closing at record highs. The S&P BSE Sensex closed in on the 50,000-mark, hitting an intraday high of 49,874 points, just 126 points short.



Market analysts cited positive global cues, healthy quarterly results and slow-but-sustained FII inflows as the factors for indices' rise.

Globally, shares were mostly higher ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration as US President on Wednesday.

On the domestic front, sustained FII inflows and strong corporate earnings kept the sentiments high.

Among sectors, auto, IT, PSU banks and media rose the most while FMCG ended marginally in the negative.

Besides, rise in the shares of index-heavy weight Reliance Industries (RIL) also supported the Sensex. Its shares closed at ₹2,054.85, higher by ₹38.55, or 1.91 per cent, from its previous close.

Consequently, Sensex ended at its record closing level of 49,792.12, higher by 393.83 points, or 0.80 per cent, from its previous close of 49,398.29. The Nifty50 too settled at new closing high of 14,644.70, higher by 123.55 points, or 0.85 per cent, from its previous close.

Vedanta's Covid vax held at Jharsuguda plant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, rolled out the Covid vaccination program for its medical personnel and healthcare staff, organised in partnership with the District Health Administration of Jharsuguda, Odisha.

In the first phase, 125 personnel from Vedanta's Occupational Health team will be vaccinated.

Dy CEO (Aluminium Business), Vedanta Ltd Rahul Sharma said, "The Odisha Government's rapid and firm response in dealing with the situation, from creation of COVID Hospitals in every district to implementing stringent public protocols, has been a superlative example in keeping the disease under control."

"The safety and health of our employees and business partners is our foremost priority. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Odisha, we have lent extensive support to the state government, district administrations of Jharsuguda and Kalahandi, and the local communities, reaching out to more than 10 lakh people in the process. We remain committed to the fight against COVID and keeping our employees and communities safe," Sharma added.

Odisha drops by two ranks to 14

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Odisha dropped two ranks from its previous position among the top ranking 'major state' in Niti Aayog's second edition of India Innovation Index 2020 that ranks different states based on how they supported innovation and disruptive technologies. Odisha was ranked 14 in this index that was released Wednesday.

Earlier in the first edition of Innovation Index released in 2019, Odisha was positioned at 12th position, but now it has dropped by two ranks with a score of 18.94.

In the 'Major States' category, Karnataka continued to occupy the top position, while Maharashtra moved past Tamil Nadu to reach the second place. Telangana, Kerala, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab completed the top ten in that order. Karnataka's rank is attributable to its substantive number of venture capital deals, registered geographical indicators and information and communications technology exports.

Karnataka's high Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow has also enhanced the innovation capabilities of the state. Four southern states—Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana



THE INNOVATION INPUTS WERE MEASURED THROUGH FIVE ENABLER PARAMETERS, AND THE OUTPUT THROUGH TWO PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS

■ Odisha was ranked 14 in this index that was released Wednesday

■ Earlier in the first edition, the mineral-rich state was ranked 12

■ Among the UTs, Delhi retained its first rank, while Chandigarh made a big leap since 2019

and Kerala—occupied the top five spots under the 'Major States' category this year.

Among the Union Territories, Delhi retained its first rank, while Chandigarh made a big leap since 2019 and landed in the second place this year. Under the 'North-Eastern/Hill States' category, Himachal Pradesh moved up from the second position to emerge as the top performer (in this category), Sikkim, slipped down to the fourth position.

In the second edition too, the index found that the level of competitiveness among the states and

union territories was high, which is essential for them to continually improve on their enabling factors as well as innovation performance, year by year.

The innovation inputs were measured through five enabler parameters, and the output through two performance parameters. While 'Human Capital', 'Investment', 'Knowledge Workers', 'Business Environment', 'Safety and Legal Environment' were identified as enabler parameters, 'Knowledge Output' and 'Knowledge Diffusion' were chosen as the performance parameters.

MCL produces 37.98 MT of coal in Q3, FY'20-21

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: One of the leading coal producing companies Mahanadi Coalfields (MCL) ended its third quarter with total coal production of about 37.98 million tonne during current financial year.

The subsidiary of Coal India Limited fell short to achieve its target for third quarter. The company had set target to post about 47.42 million tonne of coal production during Q3 of current fiscal.

The company has also not met its monthly target during third quarter as well.

According to production data available at MCL's website, the company registered about 14.10 million tonne of coal production in the month of December, 2020. It has targeted to achieve 15.84 million tonne in same month. MCL produced

0.048 million tonne of coal from underground while 14.05 million tonne from opencast mining.

In November, MCL produced 12.79 million tonne of coal from both underground and opencast mining while it has set target to achieve 15.98 million tonne. Similarly, the company produced 11.08 million tonne out its target of 15.60 million tonne in October.

According to media report, MCL has set target to achieve 173 million tonne of coal during current fiscal in Odisha.

According to sources the company expected to extract around 5 lakh tonne of coal per day and 15 MT coal in a month. Also a media report claimed that the coal producer has also set a target to produce 263 million tonne of coal by 2023-24.

NBFCs SEEK CONTINUED LIQUIDITY SUPPORT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 20: Non-banking finance companies expect the government to provide continued liquidity support by encouraging banks to lend more to the sector, setting up a permanent refinancing window and relaxing external commercial borrowing norms in the upcoming Budget.

The government will present the Budget for fiscal 2021-22 February 1, 2021.

To mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on NBFC sector, the government and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have announced various schemes such as the Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme (PCGS), Targeted Long-Term Repo Operations (TLTRO) and Special Liquidity Scheme (SLS). "This budget is important because it will be the first budget

after the pandemic, which dragged the economy into contraction mode and has taken more than 1.5 lakh lives so far in India.



"The government and RBI took calculated measures which aided economic recovery. We expect similar policy momentum to prevail in the Union Budget FY22," IndoStar Capital's CEO and executive vice-chairman R Sridhar said.

In its pre-budget memorandum submitted to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month, Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) said bank funding of small and medium NBFCs has been a challenge due to various reasons, especially during the last two years.

"The tepid response to the TLTRO 20, which mandated banks to invest at least 50 per cent of the stipulated amount in small and medium NBFCs, was a clear example of this. The need, therefore, is to reduce the over-reliance on banks and have a dedicated refinancing body," FIDC, a representative body of assets and loan financing NBFCs, had said in the memorandum.

It suggested allocating a fund dedicated to funding small and medium NBFCs to SIDBI and Nabard.

'Pandemic, surging food prices leave many in Asia hungry'

THE LATEST ESTIMATE IS THAT NEARLY 688 MILLION PEOPLE GLOBALLY ARE UNDERNOURISHED, MORE THAN HALF OF THEM IN ASIA

AGENCIES

United Nations, Jan 20: United Nations agencies are warning that more than 350 million people in the Asia-Pacific region are going hungry as the coronavirus pandemic destroys jobs and pushes food prices higher.

The report issued Wednesday by four agencies says the pandemic is making it difficult for 1.9 billion people to afford healthy diets. It follows an earlier report that forecast that in a worst case scenario that 828 million people might suffer from acute hunger because of the crisis.

The latest estimate is that nearly 688 million people globally are undernourished, more than half of them in Asia. The largest share is in South Asian countries like

Afghanistan, where four in 10 people are malnourished.

The report is mostly based on data up to 2019, before the pandemic struck. But it also estimates that an additional 140 million people were likely to have fallen into extreme poverty in 2020 due to the impact of virus outbreaks and lockdowns.

By the end of last year, some 265 million were estimated to be facing acute food insecurity.

A key factor is food affordability, a problem in wealthy nations like Japan as well as impoverished places like East Timor and Papua New Guinea, said the report issued by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organisation. Disruptions and job losses due



to the pandemic are preventing families from getting enough to eat in many places. That's evident in the long lines seen at food banks even in the US.

In India, broken supply chains and transport problems, especially during pandemic lockdowns, have prevented surplus grain stocks from reaching all those in need.

Day labourers and migrants are the most vulnerable, despite a massive public distribution system that entitles 75% of the rural population and half of those living in cities to subsidised food grains.

Since eligibility for such programs is based on a census that is nearly a decade old, many urban poor and migrants cannot tap those resources.

Across Asia, high prices for fruits, vegetables and dairy products have made it "nearly impossible" for low income families to have healthy diets, the report said.

FAO data show food prices rose to their highest level in nearly six years in November.

Many in the region instead end up consuming high-calorie, cheap processed foods that contribute to problems with obesity and dia-

betes but lack vitamins and minerals.

Data in the report show that it is more expensive to eat a healthy diet in Thailand, Laos, Bhutan and Indonesia, at about \$5 per day, than it is in New Zealand and Australia, at less than \$3 per day.

A nutritionally adequate diet tends to cost \$2 to \$3 per day in most countries, rich or poor; but is more expensive in Japan and South Korea. In most countries, the cost of a nutritious diet is two to three times that for a one just sufficient to provide enough energy.

The cost of long-term deprivation is seen in higher rates of death and illness. Tens of millions of children suffer from wasting or stunting, failing to grow well and unable to achieve their full potential.

Forget India, the whole world will stand up and salute you: Shastri's rousing dressing room speech

Guru praises Rahane & Co



Pant world's best-ranked Test keeper

DUBAI: India's Rishabh Pant became the top-ranked wicket-keeper batsman in the world after his sensational series-winning 89-run knock in the Brisbane match pushed him to a career-best 13th spot in the ICC Test batting rankings, issued Wednesday. Pant, who won many admirers for his fearless and mature batting, has 691 points in his kitty. South Africa's Quinton de Kock (677) is the next best wicket-keeper batsman in the list in the 15th position. Australia batsman Marnus Labuschagne went past India skipper Virat Kohli (862 points) to third position with a career-best 878 rating points. Kohli missed the action as he was on paternity leave. Cheteshwar Pujara moved up one place to seventh.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Jan 20: There were smiles, lots of whistles and a round of applause to each other every few seconds as India coach Ravi Shastri got down to commending the 'courage, resolve and spirit' of his wounded warriors in a stirring dressing room speech after the conquest at the Gabba.

It was a little over three-minute speech that Shastri delivered after his injury-ravaged side chased down an imposing 328 in the fourth and final Test to hand Australia their first loss in 32 years at 'Fortress Gabba' to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in style.

"The courage, the resolve, the spirit, that you guys have shown is unreal. Not for once you were down, injuries, 36 all out (in the first Test), you had the self-belief in you," an

emotional Shastri said with captain Ajinkya Rahane standing calmly by his side.

"It doesn't come overnight but now that you have this self-belief, you can see where you have taken a game as a team. Today forget India, the whole world will stand up and salute you. So remember what you guys have done today. You need to enjoy this moment, don't let it just go away, enjoy as much as you can," advised the young team.

Batting mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara, who took blows to his body but stayed firm, match-winner Rishabh Pant's extraordinary stroke-play, and young opener Shubman Gill's calm counter-attack drew special appreciation from Shastri.

"It started in Melbourne. Sydney was fantastic, it allowed us to come here even-steven. And to pull off something (like this)

today was simply outstanding," said Shastri.

"Shubman great, great. Puji you will be known as the ultimate warrior," said Shastri to whistles, especially from young pacer Mohammed Siraj, and applause from the team.

"And Rishabh, simply outstanding. The way you were batting, you gave heart attacks to a few every moment but what you have done is magnificent," he added as the keeper-batsman looked on with a child-like grin on his face.

The man who continued to be resolutely calm amid the obvious excitement was Rahane and he nodded in acceptance as Shastri acknowledged his leadership.

"Jinx to lead the side from the position where we were and to make them bounce back and control things in the middle like the way you have

done is simply, simply, brilliant," said the 58-year-old former all-rounder.

And finally, Shastri applauded T Natarajan, the net bowler who became a front-liner, and the duo of Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur, the men who made as much difference with the bat as with the ball.

"In this Test match, I would not want to forget is three debutants and their performances in that first innings. Nattu, Washi and I say Shardul because he was injured in the first Test he played (in 2018).

"For you to show that spirit, that's what broke the back of Australia, more than anything else, that we could come back and get 330 or 340 on this wicket after being 180/6," he said.

Clarke slams negative Oz approach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Jan 20: Former captain Michael Clarke has criticised Australia's 'negative' approach in the Test loss to an under-strength Indian team, saying the hosts, instead of pushing aggressively for wins, seemed scared of defeat.

Clarke, however, refused to blame team leader Tim Paine for the unthinkable Test series defeat at home. An injury-ravaged India beat Australia by three wickets in the final game in Brisbane Tuesday to win the series 2-1 and retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.



"I thought we might have been a tad negative at certain stages throughout because we were scared to lose versus attack hard and look to win the game," Clarke said on Big Sports Breakfast.

Paine, who took over from Steve Smith in 2018 after the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa, is coping criticism for not only the 1-2 defeat but also for his sloppy work behind the stumps. However, Clarke said it was the negative mindset that pegged Australia back.

"At the end of the day, whether we lost with 20 overs left in the game or on the last ball of the game, it didn't matter. We had to win that game to win that trophy. I sort of feel we should have approached the



Matthew Wade congratulates Cheteshwar Pujara as other Australian players, including skipper Tim Paine, look on after India's win at Gabba, Tuesday

PONTING SHOCKED

BRISBANE: A 'shocked' Ricky Ponting is struggling to comprehend how India's 'A team' overwhelmed Australia in the Test series in their own backyard.

Hit by a spate of injuries, India competed without many of its key players, yet downed Australia by three wickets in the series-deciding fourth Test at the Gabba, a month after the Adelaide debacle where they scored their lowest Test score of 36.

"I'm quite shocked that Australia weren't quite good enough to win this series. The cold hard facts of it are pretty much that was the India A team that played this Test match and still won," Ponting told cricket.com.au.

"Considering everything the Indian team has been through in the last five or six weeks, with the cap-

tain leaving, all the injuries they've had - they've been through 20 players - (Australia) have been at full-strength, bar Davey (Warner) missing early on, so it's really hard to comprehend.

"It's probably not even (India's) second-picked team because you think of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ishant Sharma and those guys who didn't even make it out here. Rohit Sharma turns up for the last two Test matches only."

Ponting said India won all the key moments throughout the series and that was the difference between the two sides. The legendary batsman, who coached Delhi Capitals in the last IPL in the UAE, said all the setbacks India had to deal with showed the depth and the talent the country has.

Lee told foxsports.com.au. "And look, there's been a lot written about Tim Paine behind the stumps. He's graced a few chances, but who hasn't? You look at all the keepers in history and I'm sure there would be plenty who had leaner periods behind the stumps.

"With the bat, you can't fault him. He goes along with Marnus Labuschagne as having one of the best techniques in the team. He stood up and took on the Indian players."

Warne predicts 'huge fallout' in host team



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Brisbane, Jan 20: The legendary Shane Warne believes the embarrassing Test series loss to an under-strength India will result in a 'huge fallout' in the Australian team and said a few heads could roll in the coming days.

"I think there'll be a huge fallout from this (defeat). There's not too many times that you lose to the second or third (choice) side," Warne was quoted as saying by Fox Cricket.

"Their (Australia) tactics will come into question, and they have to. Bowlers will come into question, people's spot in the team will come into question. It has to. You can't just deflect it and flick it off and say India were too good for us," he added.

Warne was, however, effusive in his praise for the Indian team which braved injuries to its key players and absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli after the first Test on pater-

nity leave to emerge triumphant.

"That's not taking anything away from those Indian guys that played but their first selection side, there's probably only two or three players in that side who would play."

The spin legend said Australia didn't grab their chances in the series. "Yes they were, but Australia had so many chances in this series to bury it and crush India, but they couldn't do it. They just couldn't do it," he said.

Warne was also critical of Tim Paine's captaincy and said the wicket-keeper didn't own up responsibility for his failed tactics. "I think at times their tactics haven't been good enough, and I suppose that's got to come down to Tim Paine as captain," he said.

"It's not just Tim Paine's fault, the bowlers are allowed to say 'Tim I want to do this', so it's a combination between the bowlers and the captain. But at the end of the day, you are captain, you have to take responsibility. He'll be disappointed."

CA lauds India for epic series win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Jan 20: Cricket Australia (CA) Wednesday saluted the Indian team's 'resilience, courage and skill' during their historic Test series win over the hosts and expressed gratitude to the BCCI for the 'sacrifices' it made to ensure a smooth conduct of the epic contest.

A second-string Indian team, led by Ajinkya Rahane, braved all odds to defeat a full-strength Australia by three wickets at the Gabba here to win the four-Test series 2-1 and retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Tuesday in Brisbane.

"On behalf of everyone at CA, we congratulate Team India for their resilience, courage and skill demonstrated in retaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in a series that will be talked about for generations to come," CA wrote in a Thank You note to the BCCI.

The note, written by CA interim CEO Nick Hockley and Chair Earl Eddings, was addressed to 'friends in Indian cricket', the BCCI, acknowledging the role played by the Sourav Ganguly-led board in successfully completing the tour amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Australian cricket will forever be grateful to the BCCI for their friendship, trust and commitment in helping to deliver a series that has brought joy to many millions of people around the world at a time they needed it most."

The unique challenges of international touring during a global pandemic, considerable and onerous travel, and the support staff for all they have given.

Over the past nine weeks, the Indian and Australian men's teams completed outstanding ODI and T20I series, followed by one of the greatest Border-Gavaskar Test series ever competed," it added.

The CA officials said that the BCCI's cooperation was crucial to making the tour a hit. The series gave the financially struggling CA a major boost with expected revenue of 300 million Australian dollars.

The two teams brushed aside some unsavoury controversies like the racist chants against Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah by the crowd in the Sydney Test, to ensure that the focus remained firmly on cricket.

"Despite the many public health and logistical challenges, the BCCI engaged with a spirit of cooperation befitting their status as one of international sport's greatest ambassadors. We will never forget



the sacrifices made by our friends at the BCCI that made all this possible," they said.

The note also appreciated the contributions of all other stakeholders, saying the series witnessed many enthralling contests between players of the two sides.

"From the sublime fast bowling of Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins, to the wonderful batting of Ajinkya Rahane and Steve Smith, to the exciting debuts of Shubman Gill and Cameron Green - and much, much more - the past two months of cricket have been absolutely enthralling.

"May we also take this opportunity to thank everyone who played their part to deliver this memorable series - governments, health officials, venues, broadcast and commercial partners, cricket associations, players, match officials, staff and their families."

KP warns India of England in a tweet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Kevin Pietersen's tweet in Hindi language had the netizens in splits as the former England skipper asked India to celebrate their monumental Test series win over Australia but also warned that the 'real team' is coming to take them on.



The former England skipper tweeted after India's heart-stopping three-wicket win in the Brisbane Test Tuesday. "India - yeh aithaasik jeet ka jashn manaye kyuki ye sabhi baadha ke khilaaf hasil hui hai (India celebrate this historic win because it has come after overcoming all the obstacles)," Pietersen tweeted.

"LEKIN, ASLI TEAM toh kuch hafta baad a rahi hai jisse apko harana hoga apne ghar mein (But the real team is coming after a few weeks and you have to beat it in your own backyard)," he wrote referring to India's next assignment against England at home.

The four-match series, starting February 5, will be played inside a bio-bubble in Chennai and Ahmedabad. "Satark rahe, 2 sap-

BCCI likely to allow 50 per cent crowd

NEW DELHI: The BCCI brass is seriously contemplating allowing 50 per cent crowd attendance at both Chepauk and the newly constructed Motera Stadium during India's upcoming four Test matches against England. The first two Tests will be played in Chennai, beginning February 5, while the next two will be played at the renovated stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad. The BCCI is believed to be taking a cue from Cricket Australia which had allowed entry of spectators during the India series that concluded Tuesday. "As of now, we are likely to allow 50 percent spectators for the four Test matches. The BCCI is in talks with both state cricket associations (TNCA and GCA) and also state health authorities," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. "If you allow 50 percent crowd with all necessary precautions, then it will be an indicator if we can also allow spectators during IPL in India," the source said.

taah mein bahut adhik jashn manane se saavdhaan rahan (Stay alert and don't over-celebrate in these two weeks)," added the former England captain.

Praveen last-gasp winner lifts Blasters

AGENCIES

Goa, Jan 20: Kerala Blasters came back from behind to rivals Bengaluru FC 2-1 in an ISL clash at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim, Wednesday.

Cleiton Silva had given Bengaluru the lead in the 24th minute but Puitea (73rd), who came on as a substitute in the second half, brought Kerala Blasters back in the game. Rahul KP (added-on time) then netted the late goal to seal crucial three points for the Yellow Army.

Kerala Blasters moved up on the league table eclipsing East Bengal to the ninth position with 13 points from 12 games. Bengaluru, on the other hand, remained on the seventh position, same points as Kerala.



Blasters came close to open the account twice inside five minutes but failed to find the target. In the 14th, Sahal Abdul Samad curled in a corner and Gary Hooper managed to get a touch as he flicked it towards the far post and Vicente headed the ball down. Costa Nhamoinesu attempted to lob the ball over Gurpreet Singh Sandhu in a first-time attempt but it went above the crossbar.

Four minutes later, Vicente Gomez won a ball in the midfield and found Hooper on the right of the box. Hooper tried to square it towards his left but it came off a Bengaluru defender and fell to Hooper again who tried to slot the ball home through the far post but it went wide.

Smith released, Raina retained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Sanju Samson replaced Steve Smith as Rajasthan Royals captain after the Australian batsman and some other under-performing stars were released by their respective IPL franchises even as Chennai Super Kings retained veteran Suresh Raina for the upcoming IPL-14.

The deadline for the eight franchises to submit the lists of retained and released players for the next edition of the lucrative league ended Wednesday. Samson was appointed to the top job after RR decided against renewing former skipper Steve Smith's contract. Smith's contract ended in October 2020.



The Australians, smarting from a Test series loss to an injury-plagued India, took a hit as the likes of the explosive Glenn Maxwell and opener Aaron Finch too were released by KXIP and RCB respectively.

Also released by KXIP were West Indies all-rounder Sheldon Cottrell, Afghanistan's Mujeeb-ur-Rahman and New Zealand's Jimmy Neesham, who underwent a surgery recently to treat an injured finger.

CSK's Harbhajan Singh and Mumbai Indians' Lasith Malinga were among the other big names to be released by their respective sides ahead of next month's auction. Harbhajan was joined by the likes of Kedar Jadhav, Piyush Chawla and Murali Vijay who were also let go by the franchise.

Also released by MI was Sherfane Rutherford, while Delhi Capitals decided to enter the next edition without English batsman Jason Roy, wicketkeeper Alex Carey, leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane and seamer Mohit Sharma.

The seasoned Raina was retained by the MS Dhoni-led CSK notwithstanding his sudden departure from the last IPL in the UAE.